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DISCOURSE

Concerning the
CERTAINTY
OF A

Future and Immortal State.

IN
Some Moral, Physiological, and
Religious Considerations.

By a Doctor of PHYSICK.

Ab iis, qui pecudum ritu ad Voluptatem omnia referunt, longè dissentimus; nec mirum. Nihil enim Altum, nihil Magnificum ac Divinum suspicere possunt, qui suas omnes cogitationes abjecerunt in rem tam humilem, tamq: contemptam. Cic. de Amicitia.

Certa apud homines ea sunt quæ sine pervicaciâ & stultitiâ negari non possunt.

M. Canus.

L O N D O N:

Printed for W. Freeman, at the Bible against
the Middle-Temple Gate in Fleet-street.

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DISGOURSE

Concerning the

CORRUPTION

OF A

Parliamentary State

Some of the

Ways of

Improvement

of the

Country

of the

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A
DISCOURSE

Concerning the

CERTAINTY

OF A

Future and Immortal State.

TH^O' divers *excellent Discourses* have been written of late, as well as in former Times, by good and worthy Men, for the ascertaining to Mankind a succeeding *Immortality*, so soon as a period is put to the uncertain course of this mortal Life; and tho' Divines do frequently inculcate the belief of
B this

this Truth by very powerful Arguments, to the Joy and Comfort of Good men, and to the Confusion of Unbelievers, yet we do not find, that new endeavours of Conviction, do become altogether unnecessary, no more then the reiterated Instructions we constantly have of our Duty. What is said thereupon by Excellent Divines, tho' never so well, is now-a-days excepted against by some, as a thing done of course by them in consequence of their Calling, or that they are too much a Party in this Concern to be very easily credited, by Men of penetrating Wits, and unbiassed Judgments; by such as know the World thoroughly, and therefore are not, like the Vulgar, to be imposed upon slightly. Howsoever frivolous and indecent such Pretences are in reality, yet the common defence of our *Immortality*

*tal*ity, ought not at least to be so appropriated to the Sacred Province, as not to allow others to join, the best they can, in the opposing of Infidelity. The *Soul* and the *Body* are so intimately united, and nearly related by a mutual Coalition or Cohesion, until their Dissolution, that if any other Profession may be permitted, without Offence to Divines, to treat of the *Soul's* *Immortal* Capacity, those that Physically consider the *Mysterious* *Ἐτελεύχεια*, or the *Animality* of an Organical Body, and who do strictly examine into the *Faculties and Functions of the Soul*, whether *Natural, Vital, or Animal*, may be somewhat excused, if their more proper Contemplations should happen to lead them one step higher than usual, and exalt their Thoughts above the inferior Subject of a *Humane Body*,

with respect to its heathful or morbid State.

The *Soul's Immortality* has been an Enquiry of that concern, that Good men, and Philosophers in all Ages, and in all Countries, have exercis'd their Faculties, and employ'd their Speculations concerning it; and they have formed many weighty Arguments for the proof of it from Natural Reason, when they had no *Revelation* for its *Certainty*; and when the common and sensible Evidence they had of it from the visible Works of God, the stupendous frame of this World, and the ordinary course of an Overruling Providence, were thought sufficient to convince them of an invifible *Future State*.

And certainly no Disquisition whatsoever can give the Mind of any good Man fo delightful a
Pro-

Prospect, or so useful an Entertainment, as the credibility of a *Life Eternal*, and the hopes of enjoying Eternal Happiness: For if *Plato's Phædo*, that treats of *the Immortality of the Soul*, by the obscure Light of Nature, and the weakness of Humane Reason, could give *Cato Utican* such comfortable hopes of *Immortality*, in his despondency of the Publick Affairs, that he chose to read it twice over at *Utica*, before he Kill'd himself, to avoid falling into the Hands of *Cæsar*; how much more satisfactory and beneficial must the Enquiry be, that is founded, not only on the glimmering lights, and fainter reasonings of either Natural or Moral Philosophers, but also on the undeniable and irresistible Authority of *Evangelical Demonstration*?

The Contemplation of what Happiness Wise and Good Men may reasonably expect hereafter, and what a solid Foundation they may fix their Minds upon, when the uncertainty and dissatisfaction of Humane Affairs has disquieted their Thoughts, and the Pleasures of this Life, upon a Review, have lost their chief Attractions, has been so pleasing and delightful a Diversion, that I have, at some leisure Hours, made a few plain, and I hope, useful Reflections on the Grounds we have, not only to Hope, but to Believe undoubtedly a *Future State*.

And tho' the excellency of the Subject does deserve the best Representation possible, and can never want the great Advantages it constantly receives from the *Sacred Function*, yet it will be allowed to others, who do not so well abound in Spiritual Accom-

Accomplishments, to cast their *Mite* into the *Spiritual Treasury*. For there are few arrived to that State of Perfection, who do not still want sometimes new, and *different* Motives to awaken them out of a Natural Drowsiness, or Lethargy of stupid Thoughts, in relation to *Futurity*. Our Christian Education, and Conversation with good persons, does indeed make most of us ashamed of publicly owning, that we do *not* believe a *Future State*; but the common course of Men's Lives, their indulging themselves in any *one* Act of known Injustice, or habit of Immorality, is a contradiction to their Pretences, let them be never so specious, for such Belief.

The following Considerations may perhaps be acceptable, and in some measure beneficial to the Good; and may serve to

confirm the good sentiments of those that are well inclin'd; but there is little hope of convincing our *Modern Infidels*, who have fix'd their Resolutions too strongly, to be easily removed from them, and who have espoused *this World*, or some of its *Forbidden Pleasures*, with an Union so indissoluble, that it will be vain to propose Arguments against the Choice they have made, unless we could tell how to withdraw their Affections, and give them another sense and taste of things than what they have. It cannot be denied, but that such persons do still retain their Reasoning Faculties, tho' they will not make a good use of them; and that they are not deprived of their Visual, tho' they shut their Eyes close, and will not see the visible Evidences, or perceive the foot-steps of Providence,

dence, throughout the Dominions of Nature. Whoever can sensibly demonstrate to them, that it is more eligible and worthy of their Choice, wholly to forbear *Unlawful Pleasures*, than to allow themselves in their Enjoyment; and that it is abundantly better for them to preserve their Innocency for the future, and to commit no Acts of Injustice and Oppression, when it lies in their power to do them safely, without incurring the Penalties of the Laws, rather than to enlarge their Fortunes, and aggrandize their Families, by indirect Practices, and by vile opportunities of doing Wrong to others, will effectually shake the foundations of *Unbelief*, and will open their Eyes, and make them behold clearly, the *Wisdom* and the *Power* of *God*, co-operating in the Conduct of all Humane

mane Affairs. For if a Man had the most celebrated Eloquence, or if he could work the most conspicuous Miracles, for their Conviction, unless he could likewise perswade them to relinquish their Enormities, all the charms of Perswasion, and all the surprizing Wonders, would signify no more to Unbelievers, than an idle Tale, or a heedless Dream.

And therefore let us consider a little what this is, for the sake of which, men do now remain, or become *Infidels* at present; doubtless for the freer enjoyment of *sensual Pleasures*, which give but a short and momentary Delight, and yet are generally attended with grievous concussions in men's fortunes, or with infirmities and diseases to their bodies, or with remorses and inquietudes in their minds, and with no manner of durable Satis-
tis-

tisfaction; whereas, the Innocent and Vertuous man, tho' he be liable, in some measure, to the common misfortunes of Humane Life, and to the Obloquies and Misrepresentations of others, yet he passes away his time with great content of Mind, with Pleasures that are little Interrupted, and for the most part, with Health of Body, and free from those Anxieties and Perturbations, which almost continually disturb the Vicious, and which do force them to seek for some remission and diversion, by contemptible or vain Amusements, or else by some preposterous, or unsatisfactory, and short gratification of the Senses. This is the common case and condition of those that are *now Infidels*, contrary to their own Knowledge, contrary to their Christian Education, contrary to all manner of

of Evidences from without, and contrary to the inward decisions of their own Consciences, which must and will declare sometimes against an inconsistent conduct, and against wilful Opinions, that are built on no rational Foundation. So that there seems to be a very great and remarkable difference, between the Heathens now-a-days, or our Heathens in Masquerade, who do personate Christians for form sake, or in point of Prudence, and the good and knowing Heathens of former times.

If our disbelieving *Libertines* have had a Generous and Scholastick Education, and have thereby had the advantage of extending their Knowledge, they do easily turn their Studies to *Lucretius* the *Epicurean*, or *Apollonius Tyanæus*, to *Lucian*, or *Sextus Empiricus*, instead of the Moralists.

lifts. If these famous Authors be above their reach and Capacity, our Modern *Plays* and *Poets*, and especially those which *excel in Profaneness*, do waste away their leisure Hours, and do give them an entire Satisfaction. They retain the Arguments of those Noted Writers for Unbelief, or Scepticism, or Immorality, in a careful Memory, and particularly that fundamental notion of the first of those Authors, which must never be forgotten; *That the needless Fears of some timorous Men, first invented the imagination of a God in the World.* *Primus in orbe Deos, &c.* But it is very Remarkable, and deserves a serious Reflection, that the two Ingenious Gentlemen, who took pains to serve their Country, by Translating the Works of the two first so instructive Authors, the one of them into
English

English Verse, the other of them into Prose, and which last Gentleman bestowed on the Publick a small *Specimen* of his own production, in his *Anima Mundi*, were both of them so unfortunate in some respect or other, tho' happy enough in their Circumstances, if their Speculations had been employ'd on more useful Enquiries, that they both grew weary of Life it self, even in the Vigour of their Age, and by their own Hands untimely cut short the Thread of their Lives, as their Great Master *Lucretius*, that mighty Naturalist, did before by himself; and who thereby gave a leading Example to his future Scholars, and shew'd them at least what such Principles as he taught, would Naturally lead Men unto. And it seems this great *Epicurean*, did write his Six famous Books, of
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the Nature of Things, which are still so acceptable to many of our Wits, in the lucid Intervals of his prevalent Lunacy, which he unhappily contracted from a certain Philter given him by *Lucilia*.

Apollonius, to give him also his Due, was a Man of no ordinary Power or Capacity, and was skill'd in more than *Legerdemain*, if it be true, what was current among those of his Time, and is still credited, That whilst he was making a Speech to the People of *Ephesus*, and at the very same Hour that the cruel *Domitian* was Kill'd at *Rome*, which was near a Thousand Miles distant from *Ephesus*, he suddenly cried out in the midst of his Speech, *Strike the Tyrant; — strike the Tyrant; — thou hast hit him; — thou has Wounded him; — thou hast Slain him.* — And at last

last added, that *Domitian* was *Kill'd*.

Lucian was a grinning Author of a *Tale of a Tub*; he was the most Learned Buffoon of his Time, and the more Remarkable, because that vein of Wit was not so luxuriant, nor the Humour so rampant, as it has been of late years, since an Ingenious and Facetious Monarch was pleased to favour it. But *Lucian* being Scandaliz'd at the Immorality of some Christians, as well as the Heathens, in the second Century, did egregiously ridicule all Religion, both Good and Bad, and tried his skill to insinuate, that there was no Truth in any Profession of it; Scoffing therefore at *all* in general, much to the same purpose, as our late *English Rabelais*, in his transcendently Prophane *Tale*, for the Delight of

of some of our Wits, and the Instruction of Unbelievers.

Sextus Empiricus by his Reason found out, that there was no Certainty in the best of Humane Reasoning. He made a doubt of every thing, and was sure of nothing; and therefore there is no doubt but our Doubters, or Scepticks, must have great Satisfaction in his Learned Performances.

If again our Modern Infidels b of the illiterate Kind, they the sooner become perfect Brutes, and it is much if they prove not either Swine, or Goats. These do divest themselves, as much as they can, of their Rational Part, as a thing odious and repugnant unto Sense, and commonly live like Savages, and would shew to other Men no more Humanity than Lyons or Tygers, if the rigour or terror of the Law did

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not

not restrain them in some Bounds. But both sorts of these *Unbelievers* of our time, do agree in this, That they are resolved to believe no more than they see; that all the Happiness they hope for is in this present Life, and when that is past, they hope to Die, as they Liv'd, like *Beasts*.

But the Heathens of former Times, and especially those who cultivated their Minds, or exercised their Reason about things above the common Level, were quite another Race of Men, than the *Unbelievers* of our Time; and were of different Principles, and of different Desires. If those anciently were Heathens, it was because it was not possible for them to be Christians. They hoped, and wish'd, and as much as they could, by the meer Light of Nature, and strength of Reason, perswaded themselves, that
their

their *Souls* were of a *Divine* and *Immortal* make. They were, many of them, Men of admirable Morals, who liv'd like Saints, thought a vicious course below the dignity of Humane Nature, and exalted Virtue to its highest pitch. Their Virtue was such as does not deserve to be *Despised* or *Lessened*, but rather imitated, in some measure, by the best of us. If we have greater Advantages, and greater Motives to a Good Life, than they had, let us thank God for them. It was not in our own Power or Election, to be born within the Light of the Gospel, rather than they. But if they through the Light of Nature, and Right Reason, saw even in times of Darkness, such an Excellency in Good before Evil, that no Temptations would overcome their steadfastness in Virtue, that they could even lay

down their Lives readily upon a good account, or for the good of their Country, let us rather reflect what admirable Christians such Men would have made, if it had pleased God they had lived in our Times.

Let us therefore take a short view of some few of those Excellent Men, who shine so bright in History, whose Lives were so Good, and Examples so conspicuous, that they Transported an Eminent Christian, upon comparison of the Lives of his Fellow-Christians with those of the Heathen Philosophers, into such Raptures as to say, *Let my Soul, when I Die, be among the Philosophers.*

Socrates was the first Philosopher, who thought the Study of Nature, wherein the preceding Philosophers had wholly employed their minds, to be fruitless and uncertain; that it was
exceeding

exceeding difficult to attain any certain knowledge of Natural and abstruse things; and that it was much more Useful to enquire how to govern our Appetites and Passions, how to regulate our Lives, and to form our Morals. He enquired what was really Good, and what Evil; what was Just and Honest; what Infamous and unworthy of our Nature. Even the Oracle of *Apollo* could not forbear to speak that Truth plainly, *That he was the Wisest Man in all the World*. But the humble *Socrates*, upon strict Examination of himself, could not conceive, why *he* was Honour'd with that appellation before others, unless it were because he was conscious to himself, *that he was not Wise*; whereas, other knowing Men thought and believed themselves *to be Wise*: As Good as he was,

he knew himself not to be *Wise* to any great degree, and that he really *knew* little or *nothing*. When he had lived long, doing good by his Instructions, and exhorting Men to be Just and Virtuous, he was condemned to Death by the *Athenians*, through the suggestion of False Witnesses. Whilst he was in Prison, his Friends had Bribed his Keepers to suffer him to make his Escape. But *Socrates* could by no means be perswaded to break or offend the Laws of his Country, by a secret and ignominious Flight. Whilst he was in Prison, he taught That it was better to *Die*, than to *Live*: That he *hoped*, when Dead, to go into the company of Good Men that had gone before, but that he could not be positive and *certain* in that Matter; But that *this* he was certain of, *That his Soul should go unto the Good Gods;*

Gods; and he thought, that Good Men after Death, would be in a *Happy State*, and Bad Men in an *Unhappy*. Lastly he proved by divers Arguments the *Immortality of the Soul*, and drank the Poison he was condemned to drink, with as much cheerfulness, readiness, and without the least changing Colour in his Countenance, as if he were sure to go immediately into far greater Happiness than this World can afford.

*Plato's
Phædo.*

As *Socrates* was the greatest, or certainly the *Best* of all the *Greek Philosophers*, by how much the subject of his Enquiries, the improvement of Men's Morals, is to be preferr'd before useless, or unprofitable Speculations. So among the *Romans* *Cicero* was not only the greatest Orator they ever had, but the *Chief*, if not their *First* remarkable Philosopher. His Works are

not only to all Ages the Standard of purity in the *Latin* Tongue, but his Philosophical Discourses will likewise be a perpetual, delightful, and most useful Entertainment, to all Learned, Ingenious, and Well-disposed men. I shall speak but a few things of this *Great Roman*; Greater, I think, by his Virtue, his Wisdom, his Love to his Country, and his unshaken Courage against the Enemies of the Commonwealth, than the Greatest of those Conquerors, whose Good Fortune overcame many Kingdoms and Provinces, by the effusion of Rivers of Humane Blood. He was declared by the Senate, the *Conservator of the Common-Wealth*; what by his vigilance over it, and his diligent care of the Publick; what by his charming Eloquence and defence of Good Men, and his penetra-
tion

tion into the wicked Designs, and defeating the frequent Conspiracies of Bad men. He resisted the Impudence of seditious *Cataline*, the Furioufness of the lewd *Clodius*, and exposed the wild *Mark Anthony* in the most lively Colours, in his never to be forgotten, and never forgiven *Philippicks*. What could have been said greater, and more worthy admiration, by a Christian Saint, than that Sentence of his! *One day well spent and according to the strict precepts of Virtue, is to be preferr'd before a Vicious Immortality*, or an Immortal Life spent in Sinful Pleasures. He argued strongly for the *Immortality of the Soul*, in many places of his Works, but more particularly in that most Excellent Book of *Tusculan Questions*, from the *Nature of the Soul*, and its noble Faculties; from the then univer-
sal

sal consent of all Nations, in the expectation, if not belief of its *Immortality*; and especially from the unanimous opinion of the wisest and best men in all places, who the better and wiser men they were, the more easily and naturally espoused that belief. He esteem'd all the other Philosophers who were not *Platonists*, to be *Plebeian* or *Vulgar Philosophers*, because they came not up to the exalted Notions and flights of the *Platonists*, in relation to a *future Life*, and *Immortality*. He thought no man could be induc'd to great and noble actions, or to lay down his life with cheerfulness for the Good of his Country, *sine magnâ spe immortalitatis*, without great hope of a succeeding *Immortality*. Lastly in his admirable Treatise of *Old Age*, writ when he was both old and wise, he teaches, that *this Life*
which

which is spent in corporeal fetters does hardly deserve the name of Life, if compared to the Life we expect hereafter; that the Soul is of a Celestial Nature, deriv'd from a Divine Original, and depressed into Body, which is contrary to Eternity, and to the Divine Nature from whence it sprang. And he puts the question, Do you think that I my self would have undergone so great toils and labours, by night and by day, at home and abroad, both in Peace and War, as I have done, if my Glory were to determine with my Life? I know not how it is, but my mind has always rais'd it self to a prospect of Futurity, as if, when this Life ends, my Soul were then at length to live in earnest. But says he, if in this I err, in believing the Minds of Men to be Immortal, I do willingly Err; nor will I ever suffer

suffer my self, as long as I live, to be deprived or forced from this Error, with which I am delighted.

Good God! that so strong a *Faith*, so stedfast a *Hope*, and such a love to their Country, or such a *Charitable* disposition to Mankind, *the three great Christian Virtues*, should be so firmly rooted in those that are called *Infidels*; and that such an abundance of needless doubts about a *Future State*, such faint hopes of Future Happiness, or rather such wretched and cursed Hopes of annihilation, or non-existence of the Soul after death, should grow and spread so much in the Minds of those who call themselves *Christians*, but whose Vices and Immoralities, to which they become enslaved, do wholly blind their Understanding, and absolutely subject them to the power of *Infidelity*. After

After these two great Champions of *Immortality*, one for the lasting Honour of *Greece*, and the other for Old *Rome*; I will mention but a few instances of the *Highest Virtue* of some *Romans*, and for the sake of whose unparallel'd Virtues, and others of the like nature, it is likely that it pleased God to extend their Conquests so far, and to make *Rome* the Empress of almost all the then known World; as when by Luxury and Excess, their pristine Virtue failed, there came upon them an inundation of misfortunes, of Seditions and Civil wars, which tore her bowels in pieces, and threw the People at last into a Tyrannical Government, depriving the Senate, and People of *Rome* of all their Liberty and magnified Privileges.

Scipio African, after he had lost his Father and his Uncle,
Publius

Publius, and *Cneus Scipio*, in the wars with the *Carthaginians* in *Spain*, partly by the treacherous Stratagems, and partly by the power and force of the Enemy, when it was proposed in the Senate, who should go and succeed the two excellent but unfortunate *Scipio's* as Proconsul, and there was a long silence in the Senate, no body having courage enough for such a hazardous undertaking; this young *Scipio*, at the age of two and twenty, offer'd himself for that Expedition, and soon convinc'd the Senate of his great Military abilities by his skilful discourse of the management of that War. When he came into *Spain*, he unexpectedly fate down with his Army before *New Carthage*, took it immediately, and in it all the chief *Carthaginian* Officers Wives and Children. Among them were
many

many young Ladies of incomparable Beauty, and one particularly transcending all the rest. When *Scipio* was solicited to see his fair Captives, and especially that so remarkable a one, tho' he was then so young himself, being in the very spring of his age, yet he would by no means suffer them to be brought before him, *lest his Eyes should be any ways defiled with their attractive lustre.* He ordered first the most resplendent Beauty to be immediately restored to her Husband, when informed that she was married to a great *Carthaginian* Officer, and then sent the rest away to their Parents, or Relations, without giving his Curiosity any the least satisfaction. And this so great a Conquest of himself, was soon follow'd with the Conquest of all *Spain*: For in four years time he drove all his Enemies quite

quite out of that vast Kingdom, and transplanted the war into *Africa*, thereby causing a revocation of *Hanibal* out of *Italy*; and in *Africa* striking such a terror upon all, that the conduct even of *Hannibal* himself, could not save *Carthage*, the long Rival of *Rome*, from being utterly at last *destroy'd*.

As the former was a most noble and exemplary instance of Chastity in a very young Nobleman, so there could not be a greater instance of a Noble and Virtuous Generosity, then that of *Caius Fabricius*, who when King *Pyrrhus*, that great Souldier, had invaded *Italy*, beaten the *Romans* in Battle, and threatned the destruction of *Rome* it self, and when his Physician upon some disgust, or the hopes of Reward, offer'd to *Fabricius* the Life of his Master, instead of embracing

bracing such ignominious offers, sent the Traytor's Letter to *Pyrrhus* himself in order to his due punishment for such unworthy Treachery. Infomuch that *Pyrrhus* overcome by such Virtue, grew weary of contending with such Enemies, fought earnestly for Peace, and brake out into that remarkable exclamation; *This is Fabricius, whom you can no sooner remove from his Honesty and Integrity, than you can alter the course of the Sun.*

Paulus Emilius, who had conquered *Macedonia*, and brought King *Perseus* and his Children captive to *Rome*, in his Oration that he made to the People, before his *Triumph*, prayed the Immortal Gods, that if any imminent misfortune was like to fall, by their appointment, upon the Commonwealth, it might soon fall upon Him and his House, rather than upon the Commonwealth. The Heavens it seems heard his Prayer, for

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of his two only Sons, from whom he expected the continuance of his Noble Family, the Elder died *five* days before his *Triumph*, and the Younger three days after it.

Never was there a race of Men, who loved their Country with such ardour and zeal as the *Romans* then generally did. 'Twas in vain to attempt their fidelity with Bribes, tho' never so great, before the inundation of *Luxury* brake in upon them. The three *Decii*, the Father, Son, and Nephew, deserve never to be forgotten, who all voluntarily sacrificed themselves for the Good of their Country. The Father was Consul in the war with the *Latines*; together with that *Manlius Torquatus*, who cut off his own Son's Head, because he had fought the Enemy, contrary to Order, altho' he Conquered, and gave his Enemy a notable defeat. But the Consul *Decius Mus*, In that War with the *Latines*, when he found the *Roman* Legions
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give way, as it were by some Divine impulse, *Devoted* himself to the *Dii Manes*, the *Genii* of Dead men, imprecating the same *catastrophe* to his Enemies that he underwent, and covering his face set spurs to his Horse, and rid into the thickest of his Enemies, that he might be sure to meet with his death, and to become a sort of Expiatory Sacrifice in behalf of his Army, and for the good of his Country. The same vehement Zeal transported the other two, upon other occasions, to become *Devoted* in the like manner; as if dying voluntarily for their Country, were an Hereditary quality, descending with that *Noble* Family. And certainly such an Heroick contempt of Life, could never have entred into the hearts of Men, who had no hopes of living again: For it was not a rash, but deliberate action in them, done with much *Solemnity* in the presence, and with the assistance of the *Pontifex Maximus*, or Chief Priest among the *Romans*.

Great Virtues deserve to be admired, among whomsoever, or in whatsoever place, or age, or country they are found. Happy those Heathens, who were induced by their Reason to equal in *Virtue* the best of Christians! And Happy those Christians, who through Faith have been enabled to imitate in Morality the best of Heathens!

I have mentioned these few examples among many, to shew how powerful the principles of *Virtue* could be, even among Heathens; in so much that it may be reasonably doubted, whether their *Virtues* could have been *Greater* than they were, and whether they could have risen to a higher pitch of Excellency, if they had had even *Christian* motives to incite them. If Young *Scipio*, in the height of his prosperity, when there was nothing to controul his Desires, would not so much as satisfy his *Curiosity* in seeing his Fair Captives, lest he might be

be tempted to forfeit his innocency, and might himself be captivated with them; It shews what a great Continnence men *can* arrive to, and how far Natural Prudence can conquer our vicious inclinations; and it shews how little reason Libertines have to maintain, that it is *not in their own power* to conquer their passions, and resist their exorbitant desires. If *Caius Fabricius* could shew such a truly Noble Generosity, even to an Enemy that threatned destruction to his Country, that he would rather betray an ignominious offer of a Traytor, rather then by embracing it to take so great an advantage of soon ending the War; How degenerate, mean, and unworthy is it now for a *Christian* Prince to use all oblique ways of attaining his Ambitious Ends, and to cherish the *Traytor* as well as love the *Treason*, as often as occasion offers, or can be administred? What an everlasting blemish on the

Grandeur of any Monarch must it be, not only to encourage, but to use and contrive by his Emissaries, such indirect and shameful practices, as all Good men must *abhor*, and the *Romans* would at any time have *blush'd* to execute? If *Paulus Æmilius* could have such a *Love* to his *Country*, that he could be contented, and voluntarily desire, to sacrifice the happiness and prosperity of his *own Family*, and the continuation of it, to the good and benefit of the Commonwealth, what a shame and reproach must it be to us, to build our fortune on our Country's ruine, and to sacrifice the *Publick* to our *Private Interest*? Lastly, If those Noble *Decii* could so easily *Devote*, and sacrifice themselves, or their own lives, in order to make *God* more propitious to their Country's welfare, and that voluntarily, without a Divine Command to oblige them to it: What illustrious and Heroick examples would

would not they have given, if they could have had either the Promises of *Abraham*, or the Hopes of our noble Martyrs to encourage them?

These and such-like admirable men had, no doubt, a very firm persuasion of their *Souls Immortality*: or otherwise they could never have gained such a compleat conquest over their own inclinations, or could never have attained such Generous Principles of Virtue and Integrity, such a contempt of this life, and such an ardent Love to their Country, or they could never have made their lives, and all their interest in this World so easie a Sacrifice, unless it were to their *Hopes* of a succeeding *Immortality*. For can our reason suggest, or can we possibly think, that the *Best* and *most Virtuous* part of Mankind was ignorant of *That* which was prompted to all men by the Law of Nature, and by the universal consent of all Nations? For what Nation

was there ever in all the World, tho' never so barbarous and brutish, tho' they had the most obscure notions of *Futurity*, but did expect *some state of Happiness or Misery after Death*? And how few single persons can we ever read of in History, who in great and desperate distresses (when the Heart and Conscience speak truth more than the Tongue, and when the Soul begins to see its approaching Fate) have not *then* lifted up their eyes and thoughts to a Supream Being, and then implored his aid and assistance, however before *that* time of Danger they have neglected or denied him, and however after their Deliverance from that imminent Danger they again forget him, and return to their former Immoralities or Infidelity?

But before we consider the motives that *Christians* have above all other men to Believe, and become *certainly* assured of a *Future State*,
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it may not be amiss if we do examine a little what *Natural* Evidence of it a wise and considering man may have, and perceive from a due contemplation of this Sensible World before us.

If we look up to the Heavens above, and the erect frame of man's body does naturally require us to look upwards, whereas the figure of other animals does more dispose their view downwards towards the Earth, if we cast our eyes, I say, towards those high and magnificent regions of Light in a clear evening, what a Glorious and Wonderful sight presents it self to our Eyes! If we were to see them seldom, we should find more extasies of Admiration upon their account then now we commonly have. We should not then think that even a *Roman* Triumph, a magnificent *Entry* of a Prince into his Kingdom, or a *Coronation* never so much Ennobled, that any earthly production of Nature, or curious amusement

ment of Art, should deserve our serious attention or Admiration, like this stupendious, tho' frequent prospect of those infinite, or innumerable *Stars* above us. They were so Glorious in the sight of the Heathens, that the Eastern, or Wiser Nations could not forbear to Worship them for so many Gods. And certainly that illustrious *Host of Heaven* did much better, and more rationally deserve their *blind* Worship, then the Leeks and Onions, the Cow or the Crocodile, that of the Learned *Egyptians*. Can it possibly enter into the thoughts of any sensible Man, that so many, and so Glorious Orbs of Light should happen by Chance out of a confused heap of dull Matter involved in darkness? Or rather can it be possible, that any man of common sense and understanding, whose brains Buffoonry has not turn'd, should not easily see the finger of *Omnipotence* in such spacious and luminous
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and wonderful productions? Most certainly *the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his handy-work.*

And what is this *Earth* that we inhabit, and where we grow so proud of our little Knowledge? What a dull, heavy, lumpish, and obscure part of the Creation is it, in comparison to those bright and magnificent Celestial regions, which excel and transcend our Earth, as much as Light excelleth Darkness! Our profane Wits do measure all superior Beings by nothing but dull *Matter*, and because their thoughts are gross and mean, and earthy, they think all things else must be of the same gross nature, and must be *Material* as well as *they*.

If we can believe Astronomers and the best Mathematicians that we have, we shall find that those infinite regions of Light are abundantly greater, and more capacious than our little Earth, on whose *Superficies*

perficies only we Men, as well as Beasts and Insects, are obliged to crawl together. If it were not for the *Immortal Souls of Men*, which by being joined with our corruptible Bodies are obliged for a time to inhabit and dwell in this *vilest* part of the Creation, and without whose continuance a little here, this low and little System, this source of noxious fumes and damps, this feculent settlement of gross and sordid Matter, the sinking Dregs of this Visible World, this general Infirmary, this field of Destruction, this *painted Sepulchre* of Mankind, this lump of Putrefaction, this scene of Vanity and Caprichios; and yet this mixture of Good and Evil, Great and small, Wonderful and Inconsiderable, or *this Earth* that we are so unreasonably fond of, if it were not Enobled with *Immortal Souls*, would not deserve any long Preservation, but become useless or contemptible, or
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be annihilated, and soon turned into its Original Nothing.

As for the Dimensions, or Magnitude of the Planets that are nearer to us, or the Fixed Stars, that are at a greater distance from us, *Gassendus*, that great French Astronomer, computes the *Sun* to be 167 times bigger than the *Earth*; *Saturn* the most superior Planet, to be 79 times bigger; *Jupiter* 81; and the *Moon*, the lowest of them all, that seems to vulgar eyes so much larger than the rest, to be 39 times less than the *Earth*; and he computes the Diameter of the *Earth* to be 8354 Italian Miles, wherefore its Circumference being reckoned thrice as much, must be 25462 Miles. He likewise computes the Fixed Stars of the first Magnitude, to be 108 times bigger than the *Earth*; those of the least, or sixth Magnitude, to be 18 times bigger. And from *Ptolomy*, he computes the distance of the Fixed Stars from the Earth,

Earth, to be 19000 Semidiameters. But our later Astronomers make their distance to be abundantly greater.

For if we will believe later Astronomers, the *Sun* is thought to be Four hundred ninety four thousand one hundred miles in its Diameter, or containing so many Miles in a streight line through it; which multiplied by three, makes the Circumference of it to be, One million, four hundred, eighty two thousand, three hundred miles about. And the extent of the *Sun's* influence through the planetary regions, according to the same Astronomers, (the *Sun* being placed in the Center of the Universe, according to *Copernicus*) is said to be above Five hundred and thirteen millions, five hundred and forty thousand miles.

If the *Sun* be thus prodigiously large, and the *Fixed Stars* bear but any near proportion to the Magnitude delivered by the Learned *Gassendus*,

sendus, or the prodigious distance between the Earth and them, I think we ought not to esteem *our Earth* to be a very large Empire in Nature, much less to undervalue those larger or more wonderful Celestial Lights, as if they were only so many Lamps kindled by chance, or we matter not how, or for what, and containing their regular position, their light and splendor, and their magnitude by the same chance, for so many thousand years continuance.

For my part, when I cast my Eyes upwards and behold those Glorious Lights above, I cannot but think I have no small glimpse of *Heaven it self*, and tho' we now see through a glass darkly, tho' our Divine and Immortal Souls do now see through obscure corporeal eyes, and cannot see clearly, and at a distance, without the help of Glasses of divers kinds, yet we certainly see, if we are disposed to see, enough and enough of the Celestial Seats of
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Happiness, to convince a wise man of their existence, and to satisfy his hopes of *Future Happiness*, notwithstanding the Veil before us does hinder our beholding the inexpressible Glory of the Blessed. For *what eye has not seen, what ear has not heard, and what has not entered into the heart of man to conceive*, is not to be seen, or heard, or understood, whilst we are in this low and corruptible State, whilst we live among Beasts and Worms, and are continually subject to so many *Diseases*, so many Imperfections, and so many sorts of *Misery*, as Wars and Divisions, and Contentions, as both the Publick, and our Private condition, do render us liable unto. •

But if those great and illustrious orbs of Light, neither their number, their splendor, nor their extent, are capable of making us consider that they must have an *Author*, or *Creator*, that they must and can only

only proceed from an *Almighty* and *Infinite Power*, which ought frequently to fill us with the highest degrees of *Admiration*; let us consider a little some circumstances of this *our Earth*, where we subsist, and which draws our affections so powerfully to it, that too great a part of Mankind, neither desire, nor expect any *other Happiness* but what they find in it.

And first the position of the *Earth*, so immense and ponderous a body in the middle of the fluid air, without declension into any part of the ambient air, or without any remarkable dissolution of its parts, although they are all of a corruptible, transient, and mutable nature, and subject to continual alterations, may well deserve our consideration. The so long preservation of the *Earth* in the state wherein it remains, the continual corruption of its parts, and yet an incorruptibility of the whole for
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so long a time, must be to any reasonable understanding a convincing evidence of a *Supernatural Power*, that keeps it in this state.

Nor is the continuance of this vast and heavy Mass of *Earth*, in the middle of the Air, (which often makes so little resistance to the motions even of a Fly, much less can it do so to the ponderous Earth) and its firm permanence in its assigned place of the Universe, to be alone admir'd. The *diurnal Motion* of this terraqueous *Globe* about its *axis* in four and twenty hours, all things remaining in the same regular order as if it were immovable, is a constant evidence of the most wonderful *Power* of God. And tho' this *motion* of the *Earth* does not appear evident to our Eyes and Senses, yet it must be necessarily evident to our *Reason*, unless we can more easily comprehend by it the motion of that infinite number of *Fix'd Stars* (all of them being concluded

cluded many times bigger then this Earth) and think it more certain, that such immense Beings, such an infinite number of them, can move with an inconceivable rapidity through that most prodigious circuit in 24 hours, rather than this spot of *Earth*, this Inconsiderable *Point* in comparison to those innumerable *Stars*, and to that endless Space, wherein they are contained.

Again the various productions in Nature, so excellent and curious in their kind, the disposition of parts in that admirable order wherein they are placed, such as is incredibly curious, and even magnificent, as is to be seen by *Microscopes*; the native excellence, and infinite variety of the finest *Colours*, which Art endeavours in vain to imitate, are things that are not to be slightly thought on. Inasmuch that the greatest Judge that ever was of natural and mundane objects, bids us behold but *the Lillies of the field*

how they grow and appear, and tells us that Solomon himself, who maintained the greatest Pomp and outward Glory that was ever known among men, was not arrayed like one of those, in all his Glory.

Again if we consider the wonderful fabrick of *Animals*, either the more noble or ignoble, the more perfect or imperfect; the symmetry of their parts, their proper connexion, communication, and situation, so nicely adapted to the best use that they are capable of; if an accurate account were to be given of the tuniques, the humors, the vessels, the nerves, and the muscles of the *Eye*, how they contribute to vision, and to its quick motion on every side; if of the *Hand*, how the Bones of the *Carpus*, the *Metacarpus*, and of the fingers, are orderly disposed, together with their muscles, for flexion, or apprehension, and extension; if of the *Brain* or the *Heart*, they would each of them

them be subjects, that would fill us with amazement at the Excellency of their contexture. But especially if we behold the *Circulation* of the *Blood* in Animals, as it is now to be seen by ocular demonstration, with the help of Microscopes, what a ravishing sight is it, to see the *Blood* of a Living Animal running in a swift stream by the *Arteries* unto the extremities, and returning back by the *Veins* in the same swift current! And one thing I have particularly observed, which was very surprizing, that as the salient *Blood* was driven with impetuosity through the *Arteries*, in divers places it was sprinkled like Rain into the muscular or fleshy parts, or dash'd out forcibly from the *Arteries*, (notwithstanding their thickness, or their four distinct Coats, one over another) for the nourishment of the parts. So that we may well and truly say, *I am fearfully and wonderfully made, mar-*

vellous are thy works, and that my Soul knoweth right well.

Not to be too tedious, and therefore to say nothing of the many nice curiosities that have been discovered in Anatomy by the help of Microscopes, I shall only take notice that there is an *invisible World* of minute animals invisible to the naked Eye, but infinitely more numerous than the visible animals of any kind. There is hardly a drop of Vinegar, a pustule in the Small-pox, and other cutaneous diseases, but these do swarm or abound in. *Kircher* has observed, that the air in Pestilential seasons is full of these invisible animals, and that contagion is communicated by their means. But that which *Mr. Lewenboeck* did impart to the Royal Society, and was Printed in the first of the *Philosophical Transactions*, Anno 1679, of the vast number of Animals he perceived in *semine Animalium*,

lium, is very remarkable. He observed by his Glasses, that in the *Juyce* of the Melt of a living Cod-fish, or in a quantity of its Juice, of the bigness of a small Sand, there are contained more then 10000 small living Creatures with long Tails. And continuing his computation of the number of Sands first in an inch, and then in the whole Melt, he concludes at last, after his computation of Men, and comparison of both together : that the little Animals contained in one Melt, are above ten times the number of all Mankind upon the face of the whole Earth. He farther observes in the semen of a Cock about a year old, which had been kept alone in a coop for five days, there were at least 50000 of those Animals, in the bigness of a Sand.

The Magnificence, the admirable curiosity, and the infinite variety of the Works of God, are far above man's shallow comprehension, whether we consider the animate or the

inanimate part of the *Creation*.

What a Glorious Sight will they all be when our Souls shall have no impediments in seeing them in their true excellence, and in their true dimensions, without their visible or apparent imperfections, if *Miscroscopes* only can shew to our weak eyes, that all the little *Sand* in the *Sea*, or on the *Shoar*, is an endless or immense Treasure, consisting of transparent *Rubies*, *Agates*, *Emeralds*, *Porphyries*, and others *Gems*, or precious Stones!

It was a large and noble thought of an eminent and learned Divine, who has written at large concerning *Immortality* and a *Future State*, that he would not determine too much concerning the Souls even of Brutes, *who have Sense and Perception, and Conscious Life*; and that he would not be positive concerning the final disposition of Inferior Souls, since we all know so little even of our own *Immortal Souls*,

Souls, I mean of their *Essence* in this life. *Grotius* says, that it was an opinion of the *Rabbins*, that all mute animals shall hereafter obtain a better state and condition at the *Resurrection* of *Mankind*. But however it may be with such contingencies, thus much we know, or may observe even of *Beasts*, that there is a considerable difference among thole of divers kinds; that there are among *them*, as there are among *men*, Good and Bad, better or worse, in every kind; and that some of them do excell others in good qualities and dispositions. But it is not in the limits of our finite and imperfect knowledge, to determine too strictly concerning things that are out of our reach and scantling. For as the *Pythagorean Transmigration of Souls* was a curious, and no despicable thought of a Heathen Philosopher, but deserves little esteem or consideration from us who have the Happiness of

a *Divine Revelation*, and thereby a very great advantage in our Knowledge of divers things, which we could never otherwise have attained by meer reason; so perhaps it may not be amiss if we do remain a little Modest in our definitive conclusions concerning the nature and capacity even of Inferior Beings, as we ought to be in our suppositions of the Superior. But he that calls the Beasts his *Fellow-Creatures*, condescends much too far, and does not consider the great Dignity of Humane Nature, or that *Man was made in the image of God*, and that he is but *little lower then the Angels*.

When our Souls shall become separated from those Clouds of Matter, which now darken their perceptions; when the intellectual opticks shall exert their full vigour, and have no more mists to obscure their vision; We shall then be affected with unknown pleasures, in
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contemplating more perfectly than we now can do the most Wonderful Works of God; we shall then I doubt not have as lasting extasies of Admiration, in beholding clearly the excellence and perfection of *all* things that are Made, whether animate or inanimate. Whatever we see of them now is, God knows, very Imperfect, however some may please themselves, and even boast or grow proud of their great knowledge. Indeed Good and Humble men see enough of the Beauty of the Universe, in every part of it; whereas prophane Wits and Scoffers despise every thing besides themselves and their own Understanding; they are curious in observing imaginary defects in the Works of Nature, but most stupidly ignorant and dull in discovering their True Excellencies.

There is one thing among many in *Meteorology* that deserves a particular

ticular reflection. For notwithstanding what is said by Naturalists, or by those that are skill'd in Opticks, for the explication of the *Rainbow*, and its various and admirable Colours, it is not very easy to comprehend, how such a circular appearance should in the clouds be frequently formed by meer Nature, and be so exact and perfect in its dimensions, reaching from one side of the Horizon to the other, with that variety of most excellent Colours, disposed in one constant order, and with the utmost regularity. If it were altogether a common effect in Nature, or fortuitous, or no ways Extraordinary, why do not the reflecting and refracted rays of the Sun shew us more frequently such Colours so curiously disposed in *some other Form*, beside that of a *Bow*? The best explication of it that I can meet with, is that which *Moses* gives us of it, that the *Rainbow* is one of the great
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and more remarkable Works of God himself; that God set his Bow in the clouds, and it shall be for a token of a Covenant between him and the Earth, that the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

Before we leave these short reflections that have been made on those spacious and visible regions, of Light, and concerning some of the *Phænomena* of this Terraqueous Globe, we ought not altogether to forget God's Wonders in the Deep. The *Ocean* is thought to be extended over more then one half of the Terrestrial Globe. *Pliny* affirms that there are in the Sea not only Animals resembling all of every kind which are upon the Earth, and marine Plants as numerous of every kind as the terrestrial, but that there are also in the Sea many kinds of them more then there are on the Earth. To pass by many particulars not now to be insisted on, I will

will only take notice of the prodigious magnitude of the *Whale*, to whose excessive bulk even our *Gigantick* stories bear but a small comparison. Some of their lesser kind will now and then stray into our great Rivers, such as are 15 or 20 yards in length. Whether it be to frighten us with some ill *Omen*, or to drink their fill of fresh water, I will not determine. *Pliny* says, there are some of them four acres long, or nine hundred and sixty foot. However that be, 'tis certain, they do abundantly exceed the bulk of all other animals, whether in Sea, or on Land. They are the uncontrollable Tyrants of the Sea, as they are a dreadful terror even to Mankind. They are so considerable in nature, that *Moses* in his short, but very comprehensive, and very Majestical description of the the *Creation*, makes mention of *Great Whales*, when he is silent in the naming of any other living creatures,

tures, but only in the general. Lastly they do seem to be intended for to shew the great power of God in forming such a living Prodigy, as the more minute, imperceptible animals, do shew what can be done by the same Power in Miniature. How little therefore is it that we can pretend to comprehend of that infinite Power, that Creates something out of Nothing, and can annihilate when and what it pleases, into Nothing again! that Power, I say, which can if it pleases, *from Stones raise up Children unto Abraham!*

Those that have made Voyages by Sea, must acknowledge that there are Wonderful things to be seen there, as well as at Land. But the most amazing of all to me, is that constant and regular Ebbing and Flowing of the whole *Ocean*. If it be not a constant Miracle in Nature, it will certainly puzzle, as it always has done, the greatest Wits to explain

plain its true *Cause*. The Diurnal motion of the Earth round its *axis* in four and twenty hours (which is now more easily conceiv'd and granted by the best Astronomers, rather than the *apparent* inconceivable motion of all those vast Stars, through an almost Infinite Space, in the same short time) is enough to astonish and strike with a profound Admiration every Wise and considering Man. But for the *whole Sea* to rowl with such a swift and strong current, to and fro, every six hours (respect being had to the resistance of the Wind sometimes) and notwithstanding the impetuosity of its motion, for the Sea to remain as it usually does, within the bounds and limits assigned by its Creator, with so few Inundations accompanying the rotation, and those never without the impulse of violent Winds, does plainly shew it to depend upon a Superior Restraining Power, *which placed the*
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land for the bound of the Sea, by a perpetual decree that it cannot pass it, and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail, tho' they roar, yet can they not pass over it, Jer. 5. 22. To this Power it is that we poor Mortals do owe and ought to own a continual Dependance in all things, and by this Power we do certainly live and move, and have the preservation of our Being..

Whether this flux, and reflux of the *Sea*, does in great measure depend on the four ascending and descending quarters of the *Earth*, in its Diurnal Motion, I leave to the more Learned and Judicious, to examine or determine. But our Wits and Scepticks must be at the greatest non-plus in this matter, who to avoid that unfashionable folly called *Credulity*, must and will believe no more of any thing then they plainly see, and therefore must pass by this *phenomenon* of the apparent moti-

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on of the Heavens, or insensible motion of the Earth, as either way inexplicable to the Believers only in Chance; and it is well if these do firmly believe, without any doubts, even what they see before them.

What has been said thus concisely concerning the Heavens as we behold them, concerning the Earth and the Sea, and concerning the animals contained in them, may perhaps be no useless reflection to Good and Well-disposed Persons. For such will easily see the *Finger of God* in all the admirable Works of the Creation, and will naturally say with the Psalmist, *The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. And O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all.* Such-like Contemplations as these caused an excellent Poet of old though a Heathen to break out in that Noble Thought:

Jupiter

Jupiter est quodcunque vides, quocunque moveris. Luc.

Whatsoever we see, where-ever we go, we must needs perceive a *Supream* and over-ruling *Power*.

To sum up all in few words; the wonderful frame of this Visible World, the *Heavens* and the *Earth*, remaining in that order and regularity, for so many thousand years as they now continue, by the first Establishment of their Great Creator; the light of the Sun dividing an exact equality of Day and Night in the whole year's space, to all the Inhabitants of the Earth; and the Sun's Heat being so distributed, as to cause that variety of Seasons, and those successive alterations of them for the benefit of all Mankind; the unaccountable violence of Winds, we know not from whence or from what Cause; the constant Circulation of great part of the Ocean through subterranean passages, besides the supplies by

Showers, until the Waters by the many Rivers do return back into its great capacity; the production and growth to naturity of all Plants and Fruits, from a Seed; their curious contexture of different and admirable parts fitted for their nutrition and accretion; the propagation of all Animals, both the perfect and imperfect, from an Egg; the curious formation of the *fetus* in the Womb, that exquisite production of successive Parts, suitable to the nature and uses of the different kinds of animals, by an indiscernable, but most wise Agent; the whole course of the World, and every thing in it, and especially the *Conscience* of every man, even the Foolish, as well as the Wise; they do all testify and *Proclaim* the mighty *Power*, and the infinite *Wisdom* of the *Invisible Author* and *Creator* of all things, both *Visible* and *Invisible*. For the *Invisible things* of him from the *Creation*

tion of the World, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and God-head, so that they (the unbelievers) are without excuse.

And therefore if the consideration of the wonderful works of Nature, does but lead us to the firm Belief of God, the Author of Nature, it will easily conduct us to the Belief of *Futurity*, and an *Immortal State*. Or he that *Believes* really in God the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth, the first Article of our Creed, will find but a little difficulty in Believing the two last Articles, *the Resurrection of the Body, and the Life Everlasting*.

In treating of this Great Subject, I shall not enter into the usual Ecclesiastical Controversies with the *Jews*; nor shall I meddle with the Philosophical Arguments that are commonly used for proof of the Deity. He that would see a good

account how the Prophecies of the *Messias* are fulfilled, in opposition to the incredulity of the *Jews*, may consult *Huetius's Demonstratio Evangelica*. And he that would receive a Learned satisfaction, concerning the *Verity of the Christian Religion*, may see *Grotius's* most excellent Discourse on that Subject, learnedly translated into our Language.

The *Jews* were an obstinate and a *stiff-necked people*, and for ought we can see are like to continue much longer of the same obstinate temper. They were brought out of their Egyptian slavery by a *high hand*, by amazing Miracles, by the destruction of the Land of *Egypt*, and by the loss of all their *First-born* in every Family, and in one night's time, and tho' they passed through the *Red-Sea* as on dry land, the fluid waters being heaped up like stones, and becoming a *Wall* to them in their passage, on their right hand,
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and on their left; whilst upon Moses's stretching forth his hand over the Sea, by God's appointment, the Sea returned to its usual strength and fluidity, and cover'd all the host of Pharaoh, infomuch that there remained not so much as one of them that pursued the Israelites into the Sea; yet notwithstanding these great Evidences of God's immediate Protection, they had not gone a few days journey into the Wilderness, but they Murmured abominably against their high Protector, and continually provoked, or rebelled against him.

When at last they came into the Promised Land, and were under the Theocratical or Regal Government, they were as prone to continual *Idolatry*, as if they had acted in a perfect Contradiction to the Divine Commands so frequently reiterated. And tho' they had such a constant succession of *Prophets*, and *Miracles*, yet there was so univer-

verſal a defection of the whole Nation to *Idolatry*, that the Prophet *Elijah* complained unto the Lord, *that the Children of Israel had ſo forſaken his Covenant, thrown down his Altars, and ſlain his Prophets with the Sword, in the reign of Ahab, that he even he only was left, and they ſought his life to take it away.*

In our Saviour's time, the more Miracles he wrought, the more they were hardned againſt his Doctrine; and when he had healed the Man that was born Blind, with his ſacred Touch, and at laſt exerted the higheſt act of Divine Power that could be done upon Earth, by raiſing *Lazarus from the Dead, who had been four days in the Grave*, inſtead of compunction for their former obſtinacy and unbelief, as might have been expected, they were ſtill the more hardned, and became more implacably Malicious againſt him. They then unanimouſly reſolved

solved to destroy him with the first opportunity, they then sent their Spies abroad to find him out, and were wonderful solicitous to know *whether he would not come up to the Feast.* Nay though he came to *Jerusalem* soon after, and suffered whatever could be cruelly inflicted on him by *the Powers of Darkness*; and though *the Vail of the Temple* was then rent in twain, from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent: And the graves were opened, and many bodies of Saints which slept arose, and after his resurrection appeared unto many in *Jerusalem*; and tho' his Resurrection soon followed his Crucifixion, and the Souldiers that watched his Sepulchre, to prevent any collusion, had acquainted the Chief Priests with the reality of his Resurrection, the whole Assembly was so far from relenting at what they had done, or from being Converted to his Doctrine by it, that
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they gave large money unto the Souldiers, bidding them say, that his Disciples came by night, and stole him away, while they slept; and to confirm them in that story, assured the Souldiers of their protection in case the truth should come to the Governor's ears.

Since the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and their *Temple*, and the lamentable desolation of their Country by the *Romans*, they have been dispersed like Fugitives, into all the parts of the World. And tho' they have waited in vain for above 1700 years for a *Messias* of their own fancy, since they would needs reject the *True* one, who came at the *appointed* time, when they all *expected* his coming; yet they still remain irreconcilable Enemies to the Christian Religion, and are now as zealous for the Mosaical Ceremonies, as they were indifferent to them, and easily seduced from them to any Idolatry before the coming of our Saviour. Happy had they been,

been, if they had been transported with the same Zeal when it was their Duty! but now they seem to be forsaken both of God and Men. They have no where the common Priviledges with the Inhabitants where they live, and cannot be suffered to purchase either House or Land. Nevertheless, they every where adore the *unrighteous Mammon*, and in order to Gain, if they happen to dwell where the *Inquisition* governs, they can shuffle and prevaricate as artificially, as if they had been taught and instructed in the Mysteries of Dissimulation, by the most notorious Juglers in *Christendom*.

Hitherto I have considered some prudential Motives, for the Belief of our *Immortality* hereafter; such motives as are taken either from the natural conviction of Wise and Good men, that were led unto such Belief, or to firm Hopes of another Life, by the meer strength of Right Reason; or else
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some motives from the reflections which may be reasonably made on this World, the constituent parts of it, or the Animals contained in it. I shall proceed to the strong foundation of our Faith, *the Gospel*, which hath brought the *Certainty of Eternal Life, and Immortality to Light, that were before in clouds of Darknes unto all the World.*

Now that our Saviour wrought many wonderful Miracles, such as could not be wrought by any Humane Power; and that he Rose from the Dead, and shall come again hereafter *to Judge both the quick and the dead*; and consequently that Mankind shall be Judged by him, and receive their due Punishment for an Impenitent Life, and Glorious Rewards for their Virtue and Piety; we have as much reason to Believe, as it is possible for Rational Men to desire. And I cannot but think, we may more reasonably doubt of any thing else that has been transmitted to us from Antiquity,

tiquity, then of the Truth, and Grounds of the Christian Religion, and consequently of our *Immortality*.

For why should we believe any Pagan Testimony, in any History they have derived to us, with that assurance and *Certainty* that we have for our Christian Faith? The many Miracles which were wrought by *Christ* and his *Apostles*, the confirmation of those Miracles, by the constant testimony of the times succeeding them, and by the best men of those times, ready and willing to suffer Martyrdom for those Truths, and by the universal attestation of the Best and most Learned Historians, and Writers, whose Works do still remain as so many Records, not to be disputed; these, I say, are Arguments of another force and nature, then the Fictions of Poets, the Absurdities and Inconsistencies of Ignorant times, or the weak or groundless surmises of Philosophers.

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The Christian Religion began with all humane disadvantages ; and tho' founded by a Heavenly Person, yet he condescended to a low and despicable condition, to become a Carpenter's Son ; *to be born in a Stable , to be laid in a Manger (there being no room to spare in the Inn)* a thing hardly ever heard of before or since, of the meanest person ; in order probably to shew how little the Great things of this World, which so dazle our weak Eyes, were esteemed in his sight, *to whom all Power is given both in Heaven and Earth.* When afterwards he began his Ministry, and promulged the Gospel of his Kingdom, he chose for his First and Chiefest Disciples, or Apostles, men of the lowest degree, Fishermen, Weavers, or the like, plain, honest, mean, illiterate men, that the propagation of his Kingdom might receive no advantages from Art or Policy, no assistance from Temporal

ral means, or Power. The Converts to his Religion were not invited to it by Promotion, the prospect of Wealth, or Interest, but were told that they must *all* expect to suffer *Persecution* for their Faith. And Persecution and suffering Martyrdom for it were so universally, so constantly, and cheerfully undergone by the Primitive Christians, that their most zealous Persecutors at last grew weary of their cruelties; and when instead of being discouraged at the sufferings of their Brethren, many others came voluntarily before the Magistrates, saying *we also are Christians*, they bid them go and be their own Executioners. We have seen of late in our own time, what destruction, and desolation, *one* only *Persecution in France*, at the Command of one Powerful Prince, has been able to do. But in the Primitive time God suffer'd *ten* Bloudy Persecutions by the *Roman* Emperors, to succeed
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one another. And they were all so far from prevailing to extirpate Christianity, that *the Blood of those Martyrs was said to be the seed of the Church, seed that brought forth Christian fruit*, we have no reason to doubt, *some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold.*

I cannot but here observe, that nothing among Mankind, no Religion whatsoever, but only the *Christian*, could have avoided an utter extirpation, when attacked so powerfully, and so successively, by the force of Ten such malicious and Bloody Persecutions. And since it was then so far from losing ground by them that it rather encreased over the World, notwithstanding such endeavours of the Imperial Authority to extirpate it, and notwithstanding the utmost Malice of its Enemies, we have just reason to conclude, that it had a *Divine Support*, and that such multitudes of Good Men neither would nor could
have

have laid down their Lives so willingly for the Defence and Maintenance of that Truth, unless they had been fully perswaded and convinc'd of the truth of that Religion, and of the many Miracles which had before them given testimony to it. If Christians in those days had been only debarred Preferment in the State, and were to have met with all worldly disadvantages, if they had been effectually hindred from encreasing their Wealth, from purchasing, and from enjoying the common Privileges of other Inhabitants in those Countries; I believe *we now-a-days* should think they would have had sufficient Temptations to relinquish an erroneous persuasion, founded upon credulity or simplicity. But when so many Good Men were not only willing to quit all the Pleasures and all the other inviting prospects of this Life, which they could any way propose either to themselves, or their posterity

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rity, but despised their own Lives, and were so ready to lay them down with such constancy, what can possibly be thought of them, but that they were resolved to Preserve a Good Conscience, that the loss of their Lives would be an eternal Gain to them, and that they were as firmly assured of *Immortal Happiness* for their Reward, as it is possible for Men in this Life to be.

There is one consideration that I could add, in relation to those Sufferings, or *Torments*, of the Primitive Christians: And I do not mention it in order to lessen the due excellency of their *Sufferings*, which certainly were as great as Malice and Hatred could contrive or invent; and their courageous Perseverance in them to the end, even unto Death it self, must astonish us, and raise our Admiration. But it is rather to confirm and animate Good men upon just and necessary occasions, to imitate the Example of

of those Happy persons, and not to be afraid even of following their steps, when the preservation of a Good Conscience, may happen to require such *difficult* trials. It is that tho' we do usually conceive their *Sufferings* and *Tortures* with very great horror, and may think them to have been *intolerable* to Humane Nature, yet we may reasonably suppose them to have been through the Divine Assistance, the more supportable and easy to them; since we find in our Histories, that *Mutius Scævola*, tho' a Heathen, when he mist his intended Assassination of *Porfenna* King of *Tuscan*, who espoused the Interest of the *Tarquins*, and who had besieged and much straitned *Rome* with mighty Forces, and there was no expectation of relief; when this *Scævola* found that he had kill'd a Favourite instead of the King, he did with an undaunted Courage, and Heroick Bravery, *burn that*
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band, which was the instrument in the mistake, with an amazing intrepidity, and appeared altogether *insensible of Pain* from the *fire* it self, his Spirits being then diverted from the sensation of Burning, by his ardent *Zeal* for his *Country's Good*. And since many of our Souldiers, in the heat of Battle, when their Spirits are engaged against a Common Enemy, have sometimes *no sense* at all of the wounds they have received, until their blood begins to cool, and the engagement is over; we may therefore the more easily conceive, that those Primitive Sufferers, in their Christian Warfare, were supported with more comfort, and a greater *insensibility*, when their Sufferings were undergone for the *Cause of God*, than Heathens could, or Souldiers can be imagined to do, upon less inviting prospects. And farther it has been observed, and is a thing very remarkable, that among those Primitive

mitive Christians, who had the courage openly to profess their *Faith* before the Civil Magistrate, not *one* of them was known afterwards to shew so much weakness as to shrink back, and renounce their Profession before their Tormentors or Executioners, who had boldly asserted it in the face of the Magistrate.

And as the Christian Religion upon the account of those Marytrs, does prove to have been built or establish'd upon such a foundation as no other Religion ever had; and upon a foundation, that neither the *Gates of Hell*, nor the malice of its Devils, *will ever be able to prevail*: so I would observe also, that tho' the Jews do still resist the Light of the Gospel, and remain dispersed over the World in a continued obstinacy, and hardness of heart, inso-much that no Arguments whatsoever can dissuade or convince them of their fatal Errors, who so unanimously desired formerly that

the guilt of *Christ's Blood* might be on them, and their Children, or their posterity, yet their unaccountable perseverance in Judaism for so many ages since Christianity began, is at least a standing Evidence, or a lasting Monument, of the Truth of the Law of *Moses*, and a great confirmation that the *Prophets*, which succeeded *Moses*, did exist in their time, and did really do those wonderful Works, and Miracles, which are transmitted down to us in those Sacred Writings which record them. And it seems to be a thing very incredible that such a scattered, tho' perverse a People as the *Jews* now are, and have remained all along, should willingly suffer those inconveniencies, under which they still lie in every Country, unless they were firmly perswaded from the constant Tradition which has been always among them, that the *Law of Moses*, and the *Books of the Prophets*, were once coercive to them, and

and had in their time a certain foundation of Truth. The matter of Circumcision and their other burthenfom Rites, do not seem to contain fuch Charms in them above *the Liberty of the Gospel, and the Circumcision of the Heart*, that they fhould tamely, nay wilfully fubmit their necks to that heavy Yoke, when the *Yoke of Chrift* is fo much eafier, unlefs their *Law* had been once *infallibly True*, and obligatory to them.

The *Chriftian Religion* did fucceed and perfect the Jewish, fulfilled the manifold Prophecies concerning the *Meffias*, eafed the Jews of their many outward, and troublefom obfervances, extended to others the Favour and Grace of God, which had in fo peculiar a manner been hitherto confined to the Jews, and laftly extended the *Revelation* of God's Will and Pleafure from the Nation of the Jews unto all the reft of Mankind, who had, till the com-

ing of our *Saviour* been excluded so Great a Favour, and were in a total ignorance of God's particular Commands, more than what the Light of Nature, and Right Reason, the natural knowledge of Good and Evil, and the inherent excellency of Virtue before Vice, had prompted and instigated them frequently unto.

And tho' it is not fit for Men to judge, how God shall dispose of any of his Creatures hereafter, any farther then his *Will* has been *Revealed* to us, yet I think we may judge with comfort and charity concerning those admirable Persons, who gave so great examples of the strictest Virtue, before the Gospel was preached to the World, that their Virtue and Goodness will not be forgotten, nor be without such Reward, as it shall please *God* to bestow upon them. If they had had the means and opportunities, which we have, of knowing what we do
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by the *Holy Scriptures*, how would their *Light have shined before men!* what conspicuous Examples of Perfection, as far as humane weakness can reach would they not have made! The brightness of their *Virtues*, notwithstanding the pravity of humane nature, does shew both the native Excellency of Good before *Evil*, and how much it is in the natural power of Man, to restrain his vitious appetites and inclinations, howsoever many do now resist even the *Grace of God*, as well as the dictates of their own Consciences; and would conclude, because their accustomed ill habits have taken such root in them, that it was not, or *is not* in their power, through the *Grace of God*, to amend their lives.

As the Jewish Religion was taught in the *Holy Scriptures* of the *Old-Testament*, and the many excellent precepts and examples contained in them, are of great use even to us
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Christians, to the *Christian Religion*, as to Fundamentals, is very fully represented in the *Gospels and Epistles of the Apostles* contained in the *New*. Whatsoever is not contained in them, or rightly deducible from them, is not to be esteemed of the *Essence* of our Religion, or an Article of our Faith, although many things that are extra-essential to it, may become Useful and even Necessary, for *Decency*, and for the good Government of the Church, in Peace and Order, and to avoid Confusion and Irregularities. What is contained in the *Scriptures* is as Essential to our Religion, as the constituent parts, organs, and faculties of a Man, are to the *Essence* of a Man; the Circumstantials that are appointed in many Countries after different manners, for Peace and Order sake, (if I may so speak without offence and misconstruction) do seem to resemble in some measure the Habit of a Man, which

which must be regulated and submitted to, and will be always so submitted to in the lesser matters by prudent and less scrupulous persons, according to the *Established Mode* of the Country where they live. And it would be Happy for Christianity, if mens zeal for, and animosities against those latter things, were less then it is, and the Zeal of them all were stronger for the Amendment of their *own* lives, according to the *Scriptures*, and for the more weighty and more Necessary points of Christianity.

The *Books of the Holy Scriptures*, are very plainly different from all other Books that ever were written in the World. They were written by a different, or by a *Divine Spirit*, whereas all other Books do as plainly partake of *humane* wisdom or weakness. And though many other good, pious, and useful Books, do contain most excellent instructions, and are of exceeding

ceeding great benefit to Christian Readers, yet none that remain from all Antiquity have ever been endowed with more then some faint resemblance, or imitation of those *Sacred Writings*. If any at all do very nearly resemble the *Canonical Writings*, they are some of those which We do account *Apocryphal*, and especially that most excellent and most useful *Book of Divine and prudent instructions*, called *Ecclesiasticus*.

It is a wonderful Mercy of God, that notwithstanding the frequent defection of the Jews unto Idolatry, the Wars which sometimes made great devastations in their Country, and their Tribes being carried away Captive into foreign and distant Countries, yet the *Books of Moses* and the *Prophets* were still preserved to posterity, by some special Providence of God; and so the *Gospels*, and other *Books of the New-Testament*, notwithstanding the many

ny Persecutions of the Primitive Christians, and all manner of Art and Policy that was used by *Julian* the Apostate, or others, to root out the *Nazaren* or *Galilean* Religion, as some contemptuously called it, and notwithstanding the barbarity of after-times, and the over-spread-ing desolation of the *Goths*, *Vandals*, and *Alains*, who are said to have burned all Books, and even the *Bible* among the rest, yet this *Divine Book* has been preserved by the same Providence to our times, and is, we hope, like to continue unto the end of the World.

As to the *Old Testament*, it is not to be forgotten, that the *Massoreths*, or a certain number of *Rabbins*, first chosen by *Esdra*s himself (that venerable Collector of the Established Canon of the Books of the *Old Testament*) were so careful and diligent in their endeavours, for preserving the purity and exactness of all the Contents in those Sacred Books

Books, that they counted all the *words*, and numbred the single *Letters* contained in each Book, that there might not be made in after-times any the least alteration in them, but what might be thereby the more liable to discovery. As to the *New-Testament*, it is a great Confirmation of the *Old*, by reason of the many quotations in it, cited from the *Old*, both by our *Saviour*, and his *Apostles*; and its *Canon* has been from antient times so established, by the Authority of Councils, and by the consent of the Catholick Church, and has been so carefully examined and maturely considered by the many Learned Fathers of the successive Centuries in their industrious and voluminous Writings; and the *Gospels* and *Epistles* have been so universally dispersed, and especially of late years, among Christians, that neither the Scepticism of some, nor the misconstructions of others, nor the licentious

tious profaneness of many others, will ever, we hope, be able to shake or undermine their *Divine Authority*, or impede their General Reception hereafter.

Other Books may much promote Piety and Good Life, and may be exceedingly well suited to the different occasions, conceptions, and wants of Good Men. But there is no other Book among Mankind, that so much strengthens the Faith of Christians in general, that invigorates their Hopes, that removes all doubts of a *Future Life*, as the *Bible* does. *Both in the Old and New Testament, Everlasting Life is offered to Mankind by Christ*, saith the 7th of our 39 Articles. And if the Doctrines of *Immortality and Future Rewards and Punishments* be therein plainly taught, and the same Doctrine proved by abundance of wonderful Miracles; if many great Examples of good Men, who died for that Truth, be therein delivered; and
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if our *Saviour's Resurrection from the dead, and Ascension into Heaven*, in the sight of so many undeniable Witnesses, be related therein; lastly if the best rules of good living be contained in them; how useful, how comfortable, and how necessary must it be to be very conversant in that *Holy Book*. He that much uses himself to the frequent reading of the Scriptures, not to oppugn others in needless Controversies, but with a serious desire of Instruction and information, and in order to regulate his life according to the Doctrine taught in them, however he may fall into some errors of judgment, I cannot possibly think that such a one *can* make a *Bad Christian*, and we have all the reason in the World to expect that he will make a *Good* one, in the main.

It is a great advantage we have in the present Excellent Establishment of our Church, that the *Scriptures* and the *Psalms*, are so frequently
read

read in our Churches, even as often as we meet to serve *God* in them. The Poor, and the Ignorant, and Unlearned, have thereby *the Gospel preached*, and effectually made known unto them. And perhaps the *Gospel* may still, or does more deeply enter into the minds of some, being read in its own singular simplicity, then it can do to others by any other artificial representation; when it is considered that it is *the word of God*, and of *Divine Inspiration*. Not that I would any way derogate from the usefulness, and due excellency of *Preaching*, but only that there can be no comparison between the *Authority* of what is said by the best Men now, and what was written by the *Divine Pen-men*. The best *Preaching* in the World, or the most useful, is the *Preaching of the Scriptures*; a florid discourse, that is not Scriptural, may be very acceptable in other places, but not so proper in the Pulpit. So that a very

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good Scholar may make sometimes but a very indifferent Preacher. But we have no reason now-a-days to complain at all in that respect. For certainly *Preaching* never arrived at that unexceptionable excellency as it has done of late years among us. Witticisms, and chiming of words, and merry conceits, and impertinent quotations out of Authors, and all vain ostentation, which have sometimes been in fashion, are now totally neglected, and the *Scriptures* themselves were perhaps never more plainly Preached, and fully illustrated, and paraphrased, then they are at this present. The late Great Archbishop *Tillotson* has given such a perfect Pattern of that kind, and is now so well imitated by many of the Clergy, tht we might expect a more then ordinary effect from the *Labourers in God's Vineyard*, if this age be not too much degenerated, as we have reason to fear it is, since no less a correction then an
universal

universal War is thought convenient to amend it.

The *Holy Scriptures* are so well known in the general, that it will be needless to say many things concerning them. But yet notwithstanding they are so frequently read in Publick, and so few Protestant Families are without a *Bible*, yet I will give one Instance of the ignorance some do, or may still remain in, as to the *Scriptures* themselves. A certain Gentleman well in years not long since going to *Covent-Garden Church* one Sunday morning, and hearing the 11th Chapter of *St. John* read, wherein was contained the account of our *Saviour's raising Lazarus from the dead*, came soon after to a Friend of mine, and told him how he had heard the most wonderful and incredible thing read at Church that ever he heard of in all his life, or that *Lazarus was raised from the dead, after he had been four days in the Grave*; and that he could

not have thought or imagined that so strange a thing had ever happened in the World. My Friend asked him, whether he had never in all his life heard of it before. He answered *Never*. It is a great misfortune that any Christians should either deprive themselves, or be deprived by Authority from reading the *Scriptures* in the vulgar tongue, as the Roman Catholicks are, upon pretence that the ignorant Laity would hurt themselves by it, and would be apt to knock their heads against rocks, or knotty Heretical points, but really and truly, as is to be feared, to conceal from vulgar Readers, who generally understand common sense well enough, the repugnance or contradiction that there is between the doctrines taught in the *Scriptures*, and the gainful Doctrines taught in *that Church*, and obstinately maintained by all temporal discouragements in some places, and even by fire and faggot

faggot in others, where Persecution reigns triumphant, or the Power of the Inquisition does prevail. If it were not for the *Diana* of gainful Doctrines, how could it so lately have hapned, that the good Father *Molinos* should have met with such a rigorous treatment in *that Church*, and be condemned to a long or perpetual Imprisonment, for nothing else but being *more Righteous*, and *more Holy*, then the Jesuitical Maxims would allow. This Good Man suffered for being too much a *Saint* among them, for teaching men to raise and abstract their Devotion from Lip-service, Beads, and other outward Bawbles, to the most ardent *Love of God*, and to the highest Contemplation of the Divine Majesty, by internal silence, and stifling all distracting thoughts. But the Gainful Doctrine of *Confession*, and its consequences, were like to suffer by that Exalted Holiness, for the use of which many of their la-

test and most admired Saints, had been before much celebrated, and proposed to others for imitation.

I shall leave to Divines the giving any large account concerning the *Scriptures*, and shall only make a general reflection or two in relation to them. The *Old Testament* doth contain an Ecclesiastical History of very near four thousand years, from the beginning of the World to the coming of our *Saviour*. It comprehends the greatest latitude backwards, or the earliest account of things of any credible History extant in all the World. It gives the only noble and *Majestick* account of *God's Creation* of this World. All the Heathen accounts of it are either very imperfect or very ridiculous. And the best relations they do give, do seem to be some transient Hear-says, or Traditionary remains of *Moses's* History of it; or collected by Philosophers in their Travels through *Judea*, to
or

or from *Egypt*, whence it was especially that the first Philosophers in *Greece* did use to fetch that Learning and Knowledge at first, which afterwards made so much noise in the World; and from which *Greece* the *Romans* first received it, and cultivated and improved it by divers of their own Learned Men, but especially by *Cicero*, the greatest Ornament of Learning and Philosophy, that ever lived in that or any other Country. Of all the Heathen accounts of the Creation whence-soever derived, none ever gave so full and comprehensive, so noble and excellent a description of the *Creation*, as *Ovid* does, in the beginning of that admirable collection of Poetical Fictions, his *Metamorphosis: Ante mare & terras, &c.*

The *Old Testament* does not only give some account of things before the Flood, and especially the longevity of the Patriarchs (which no other Book does so particularly of

any credibility) but describes at large the Universal Deluge, which swept away the whole race of Mankind, except *Noah*, and his Family. It continues to give so full and large an account, from *Abraham* to *Joseph*, the Husband of the Blessed *Mary*, of the forty two Generations between *Abraham* and our Saviour; of so many wonderful Miracles performed through the Power of God during that time, by *Moses* and the *Prophets*; and the design of them all to fortify the instructions and exhortations given, towards the reformation of men's manners, and to enforce their observance of the Law of *Moses*. And the Arguments therein delivered, did seem to be so powerful and conclusive, to make men amend their lives, and to cause them to bring forth the fruits of Repentance; they appeared, I say, so conclusive to our Saviour himself, that when *Dives* in the Parable would have desired

Abraham

Abraham that one from the dead might be sent unto his riotous brethren, to acquaint them what a place of torment he was in, in order to their repentance, and to prevent their coming into it; *Abraham* says they have *Moses* and the *Prophets*, let them hear them; and quickly after, if they hear not *Moses* and the *Prophets*, neither will they be perswaded tho' one rose from the dead. As if it were perfectly impossible for any Arguments whatsoever, or for any other Evidence, even the terror of an *Apparition*, to have any effect upon them, if the former Miracles that were done by *Moses* and the *Prophets* would not work their conviction. And 'tis certain tho' many among us do think still if they could see with their own Eyes an *Apparition*, then forsooth they would believe another World; that they would find themselves mightily mistaken. For as soon as they had returned
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unto their unbelieving company, and continued a while that *ill conversation which corrupts* all Faith, as well as *good manners*, the belief of another Life would be as ridiculous, or uncertain to them as it was before. And for this consideration it might be said, what our Saviour said upon the consideration, that those places where *most of his mighty works had been done*, received no benefit from them, and they had no effect upon them: He says, *I thank thee O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes. Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight*, Matt. II. 25, 26. And it would not be amiss, if those Gentlemen, who think one visible Miracle, and especially an *Apparition*, would do such wonders on their minds, would consider how *little durable effect* those many Miracles did produce formerly, that were

were done by *Moses* himself in *Egypt*, and in the Wilderness; if they would reflect how the *Pharisees* and Doctors of the Law, the most knowing among the Jews, resisted the evidence of our *Saviour's* many Miracles, when all that were sick of any desperate or difficult Diseases, were cured by him at a Word's speaking. For Miracles must have their good effect upon the *will* of those that see them, or else they will have none at all upon the *Understanding*. And if I much mistake not, more men are apt to be guided in their choice of Parties, and too often even in *Religious* matters, by such Arguments as make a strong impression on the *Will* and the *Affections*; I mean Interest or Pleasure; then there are who follow the less charming, and less powerful, but more Christian Arguments of the Understanding, Truth, and Right Reason.

Again, if no other Miracles had ever been done, but only those by
Moses

Moses himself, there would have been a sufficient evidence of God's Power to convince a Good Man of the obligation of *Moses's* Doctrine; but when they were still continued from Age to Age, from Prophet to Prophet, one would think there had been enough and enough conviction even for Bad Men. And yet Infidelity, Immorality, or Idolatry itself, prevailed with many of them, among whom these Miracles were wrought, as if there had never been any at all, or as if they had quite *Ceased*.

Indeed it pleased God to reveal his will concerning the *Immortality of men's Souls, Everlasting Life, and Future Rewards and Punishments*, but after some obscure, typical, and dark manner, under the energy and obligation of the Law. Infomuch that tho' the *Pharisees* did hold and believe a *Resurrection from the dead*, yet there was a Sect of *Sadduces* among the Jews, who denied

denied the *Resurrection*, and believed neither the existence of Angels or Spirits. Whence we may conclude, that there was indeed a sufficient evidence of those things to convince Men, seeing the *Pharisees* themselves, whose *Righteousness* was so imperfect and deficient; seeing the *Pharisees*, I say, those notorious *Hypocrites*, whose works were so contrary to their *Faith*, had such a persuasion of *the Resurrection*.

Besides, the Translation of Good *Enoch*, who walked with God in the midst of a wicked world; the Translation also of *Elijah* the Prophet, who was carried up by a whirlwind into Heaven, in the sight of *Elisha*, who had a double portion of God's Spirit upon him, were exceeding great Arguments to convince men, that there was an *Immortality* to be expected by Good Men. The strong Faith of *Abraham the Father of the Faithful*, the Faith of *Noah*,

Noah, of *Job*, of *David*, and other Good and Great Men, could not proceed from their love of this World, or expectation of any lasting Happiness in it, but from their lively Hope and expectation of Happiness in another World. And there is no need of giving many instances, that the Jews themselves had good reason to expect *Everlasting Happiness*, though the promised Blessings they had did chiefly respect this Life.

And first *Daniel* the Prophet, who had such a signal evidence of God's Protection from the ravenous Lyons, when he safely lodged all night among them, in their very Den; *Daniel*, I say, Chap. 12. v. 2, 3. tells us, that *many of them that sleep in the dust shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars, for ever and ever.* The

The second Instance I would give, that the Jews had good reason to believe the *Resurrection*, is taken from what God said unto *Moses*, when he was pleased to appear unto him in the burning bush, *Exod .3.6.* Moreover God said, *I am the God of thy Father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.* The which place our Saviour quotes for the farther conviction of the *Sadduces*, who denied there was any *Resurrection*, and who thought to have puzzled him with that foolish question, *whose Wife the woman should be at the Resurrection, who had seven Husbands.* For after he had told them, that *they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that, or the other world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage. Neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the Angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the Resur-*

Resurrection. He goes on *Luke 20. 37.* *Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord, in the place afore said, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living.* They are said to be *fallen asleep*, and to *sleep with their Fathers*, to distinguish them from creatures that are totally dead, *sleep* being, tho' it somewhat resembles death for the time, a temporary cessation of the animal functions, especially the external, belonging to a living, not a dead creature. The Bodies of those Great and Good Men, whom God honours with the appellation of being *their God*, were then in the time of *Moses*, and our *Saviour* actually dead and buried; so that they could not in any sense be said to be *Living*, but in respect to their better part, their *Souls*, which were even *then* *Living in Heaven*, and in a state of *Happiness*. These

These two instances among many others that are more collateral, and do not so explicitly declare it, as *the seed of the woman's breaking the Serpent's head*, and the like, may suffice for the satisfaction, or rather the confirmation of good and well-disposed men, that the doctrine of the *Resurrection* was not, or ought not to have been a thing altogether unknown to the Jews.

I now proceed to the Christian Revelation, of *the Resurrection of the Body*, never thought of by the wisest Heathens, and never known in the World before the *Light of the Gospel* gave evidence to it. And here it may be asked, as St. Paul did, 1 Cor. i. *Where is the Wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the Disputer of this World? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this World?* As if he should have said, 'How little and ridiculous is the utmost wisdom of the wisest men, of which they have hitherto so
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‘ much boasted, if compared with
‘ the wisdom and knowledge which
‘ the *Gospel* doth Reveal? How
‘ contemptible is all the knowledge
‘ of the Learned Doctors of the
‘ Law, and the most famous Histo-
‘ rians, in comparison to this?
‘ What a sorry amusement are all the
‘ Physical questions, and controver-
‘ sies about natural subjects, which
‘ are tossed about by subtle Anta-
‘ gonists, with endless and fruitless
‘ disputations, if compared with the
‘ wisdom of the *Gospel*? Hath not
‘ God now shewn, what a wretch-
‘ ed ignorance the wisest men in all
‘ the world have remained in, be-
‘ fore the *Gospel* made known the
‘ undoubted certainty of *Immortal*
‘ *Life, and the Resurrection of the*
‘ *Body*? And therefore St. Paul,
tho’ a very Learned Man, being bred
up at the feet of Gamaliel, yet
preached the *Gospel*, not with wis-
dom of words, lest the Cross of Christ
should thereby be made of none effect;
not

not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power. Ibid.

The Resurrection of our Saviour is recorded in the Scriptures with such circumstances as leave no possibility of doubting. Joseph of Arimathea, a counsellor, and a good man and a just, who had no hand in his condemnation, begged our Lord's body of Pilate, and laid it in a Sepulchre wherein never man before was laid. The women who came with him from Galilee saw how his Body was laid. The Sepulchre was made sure until the third day, the stone before it was sealed, and a watch of Souldiers set by it to prevent any removal of his Body. Now as it began to dawn, about the beginning of the third day, behold there was a great earthquake, for the Angel of the Lord descended from Heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door of the Sepulchre, and sat upon the stone.

His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the keepers, on the watch, did shake, and became as dead men. But notwithstanding this Vision, when they had shewed these things unto the Chief Priests, they were bribed by them to tell a Lye, and say, that his Disciples came by night and stole him away while they slept. The Angel bad the women, who came early to the Sepulchre, go and tell his Disciples that he is risen from the dead. As they were going, Jesus himself met them, and bad them tell his brethren that they go into Galilee. He then appeared unto Simon, afterwards two several times whilst the doors were shut, he appeared unto the eleven Apostles; as also before unto the two Disciples going to Emaus. Nay he was seen upon Mount Tabor in Galilee by above five hundred brethren at once (1 Cor. 15. 6.) of whom St. Paul saith, the greater part remained

ed unto that present time, but some were fallen asleep. And last of all, he was seen by St. Paul himself. And he was not only seen by his Apostles after his Resurrection, but he did eat with them; his wounded Hands and Feet were touched by Doubting Thomas, and he was seen of them no less than forty days after his Resurrection, and at last in the sight of his Apostles Ascended up into Heaven, until a cloud received him out of their sight.

If we consider the Person who thus rose from the dead, he was no less then the Eternal Son of God, by whom God made the World, and who vouchsafed to come down from Heaven, in order to become Man, and to give Mankind the greatest example that ever was, of Humility, Meekness, and Patience. Lord, what is man that thou art thus mindful of him? and the son of man that thou doest thus visit him? He gave testimony to his Divine Authority

by a long course of continued Miracles, that men might believe in him, for his *Works* sake. *The blind received their sight, and the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf were made to hear, and the dead were raised up to life, and all with a word's speaking.* It will not be necessary to enter on the particulars, tho' the *curing one that was born blind*, when at man's estate, and *the raising Lazarus*, among others, *from the dead, after he had been four days in the grave*, are such things as can never be too much remember'd.

Neither did our Saviour alone do such Miracles, but he gave power to his *Apostles* to do the like Miracles, when he was gone. As if nothing should seem to be wanting to the rooting Infidelity out of all good Soil, and for the first planting of Christianity plentifully in the World. As if there should be no excuse, or reasonable defence left for

for Unbelievers, when so many witnesses for the Truth were ready to condemn them, and when their attestations were confirmed by those extraordinary *Gifts of Tongues, and Gifts of Healing*; and this by persons altogether destitute of the advantages of Education, or Art; such as were without designs and policy, without power or interest; plain, harmless, innocent men, sent as *Sheep among Wolves*; and who after they had preached his Doctrine over all the World, at last sealed the truth of their doctrine with their own blood, being Examples and Leaders to that *Noble Army of Martyrs*, who soon followed them in their Christian Warfare.

And therefore to those who will not still Believe, upon the testimony of *Christ* and his *Apostles*, and the many signal Miracles wrought by them, but who pretend that they would easily become Believers, in case they could see with their own

eyes some of those wonderful works that were then done, I would return a like Answer with that which was before-mentioned to be made by Abraham unto Dives, in respect of his licentious Brethren; it is, that most certainly those who will not now believe upon the Authority of Christ and his Apostles, whatever they may fancy to the contrary, would not be perswaded by any present Miracles whatsoever.

Nay, farther, whatever the Lovers of this world may think, it is not so easily in their own power, as they imagine, to Believe what they have a mind to, or to Believe as their duty requires, unless they *do their duty too*. For they may as well expect that *seed sown on the way-side, or upon a rock, or among thorns*, would come to good, and *bring forth many fold, as well as that which is sown in good ground*; as that men who *set their affection on things beneath*, should likewise set
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their affection on things above, at the same time. It is impossible to serve God and Mammon; it is impossible to be a good Christian, or to Believe as a Good Christian, and to be at the same time a Bad Man, however some may please to flatter themselves. For a Tree is certainly known by his fruit.

If now we have good reason to believe the verity of the Scriptures, for the belief of which, so many good Men suffered death in the first ages of Christianity, and for the sake of of whose doctrine many pious and good men have in this very age (to their praise and glory be it spoken) suffered whatever the malice of their Persecutors could inflict upon them, we have no more reason to doubt of our *Immortality* and *Resurrection from the dead*, then we have to doubt of the existence of *Jesus Christ*, or of *St. Peter*, and *St. Paul*, once upon earth. Indeed we have no *such* evidence for
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the truth of any one other Book that ever was writ, as we have for the truth of the Holy Scriptures; and yet we easily assent to the belief, that those other Books were written in former times by such Authors whose Names are prefixed to them. We do easily believe that the History of *Livy*, the Lives of *Plutarch*, the History of *Polibius*, &c. were sincerely written by their respective Authors. But for those Divine Writings, from which we are to receive direction for the well-governing our Lives, and upon which government of our selves, our *Future* and *Eternal Happiness*, or *Misery*, do entirely depend, we have too generally very little regard; we are as indifferent, as if they might, or might not, be true; we hear them read sometimes for form's sake, and quickly forget them; and it is well, some think, if they be not also turn'd into Ridicule; whereas when they are frequently
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read with an humble mind, with strict attention, and with a sincere desire to be informed and instructed in our duty, there is no one other Book, or ever was, among Mankind, however many are of excellent use, that ever did, or can tend so much, to make men Good, and Just, and Honest, in as great perfection as Humanity is capable of; to fix our Faith upon a rock that can never be moved; to make men thoroughly contented with such a condition of life, and with such circumstances, whether small or great, as God in his good Providence has assigned to each of us, as this Spiritual Treasure, the *Bible* does.

Some think that they much invalidate the testimony of this Book, if they can pick and cull out some expressions in it, which may not now-a-days be very easily reconciled, or may partake a little of an unrefined way of speaking, or may not be so
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suitable to the niceness of polite readers, or may be difficult to be well understood; or perhaps the historical relation in some places may administer matter to Scoffers. But such things as these will have the less weight with *Serious* persons, if it be considered, that no Book whatsoever, written at so great distance of time, has been transmitted to us without some remarkable obscurities; that even all our other Best or *Classick Authors*, do abound in defects of that kind, and have exercised the skill of the greatest *Criticks*, by various lections or expositions; and it is rather to be wondred that they do still remain so perfect as they are, then that they may have some difficulties or possible failures of little moment through time, considering the inadvertencies, or unattentive carelessness of the hackney transcribers of *Copies* before *Printing* was known. Again, it may be consider'd, that
God

God Almighty in the course of this World does ordinarily make use of Second Causes ; and that the Good Men of old with their *Spiritual Gifts*, nay even their *Gift of Tongues*, were not inspired with the acquired ornaments of Humane Learning, but with the knowledge and utterance of *Divine Truths*, and that in some measure according to their natural capacities. And it is not to be expected or imagined, that all the cautions and ornaments of polite writing, all the humane advantages of Art and Education, should need to concur unto the embellishments, or enforcing of the *Divine Wisdom*. As *Temporal Greatness* and *Riches* were not thought necessary to establish the Authority of a *Prophet* or *Apostle*, so neither were the figures of Rhetorick, the accurateness of Criticks, nor the Eloquence of Orators, nor the imperfect wisdom of Philosophers, nor lastly were *the enticing*, or insu-
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ring words of man's Wisdom, tho' never so great, thought fit to be used by the *Divine Writers*. Those things, howsoever of much esteem among men, are below the Dignity and *Majesty* of the *Divine Spirit*, which plainly, and without artifice, teaches, and *leads into all Truth*. But if among those plain momentous *Truths*, some things may be found out that may serve for the diversion of Scoffers, there are likewise contained many other things, which will sufficiently astonish these Sons of Mirth, when their Conscience is awakned, and will sometimes like Thunder make the stoutest, or profanest of them all dismayed, if not to Tremble.

Indeed there is one thing which may serve to lessen in some their due deference to the *Scriptures*, tho' it may be little thought of by those who commonly use it. It is that divers very worthy persons do often let us hear of *the Author of the Epistle*

Epistle to the Hebrews, &c. instead of naming St. Paul. For since St. Paul is printed in our *Bibles* to be the Author of that *Epistle*, and our *Church* thereby allows of that opinion, it must be at least an *indiscretion* to surmise in publick, that the Author of it is uncertain, or may possibly be St. Luke; lest that doubt may unawares have an ill consequence among the vulgar, and teach them or some others to carry one doubt unto another. For although this unseasonable hint may pass well enough with the Learned, yet it will be thought to suggest, that the Preacher of it has notably studied that point, or that he is a person not to be easily imposed on; but it will be much more prudent to forbear exposing that doubt of theirs to the People, for fear of giving some offence to the Good, as well as an unnecessary occasion to the Profane. That St. Paul was the Author of this *Epistle* besides the

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Authority of the *Church* in styling him so, may reasonably be concluded from Chap. 10. v. 34. wherein he tells the Hebrews *they had compassion of him in his bonds*; and Chap. 13. v. 23. wherein he says *his brother Timothy is set at liberty*. The same expression that he uses of *Timothy* in divers other of his Epistles, as *Col. 1. 1. 2 Cor. 1. 1. 1 Thes. 3. 2.*

But to proceed, those who slight this Book, and neglect to read in it, are not capable of judging what Spiritual Advantages do frequently attend the *Searching into the Scriptures*, but those who do accustom themselves to the reading in them, or hearing them read, will find more solid Comfort and benefit from it, then they can do from any other Good Book, if this, where it can be had, be altogether neglected. And one thing I would observe, that is very worthy the serious consideration, even of our *Divines*

vines, whose Great Duty it is, to *Preach the Scriptures*. An Eminent and worthy Gentleman now living has assured me, that being formerly in company with our late most Reverend Dr. *Tillotson*, together with divers others, one in the company hapned to ask that *Great Man*, how or by what means he came to attain that Excellency before others in *Preaching*: the good *Doctor* immediately answer'd with his natural candor and modesty, *that if he had any of that Excellency, he must needs own all of it to be entirely owing unto his early study of the Scriptures.*

Now granting the *Scriptures* of the *New Testament* to be Authoritative, there can be no possible doubt of our *Immortality*, and *Resurrection from the dead*. They are so often declared by our *Saviour* himself in the *Gospel*, and by the *Apostles* in their several *Epistles*; and the *Resurrection of the Body* is

so particularly argued, defended, and proved by *St. Paul*, in the 15th Chapter of the 1st Epistle to the *Corinthians*, part of which is so constantly read in our *Office for the Dead*, that it must be needless to mention or repeat things so universally known. And therefore it is that far the greatest part even of our *Libertines*, who would fain stifle all sense of those arguments which perswade men to believe another life after this, do often feel great remorse of Conscience, and self-conviction, notwithstanding their endeavours to the contrary; and when they come to die, they are distracted and affrighted with dismal terrors, which common *Narcoticks* can seldom enough stupify. And hence it is, that those *Libertines*, who will needs live all their lives in their Sins, and consequently must necessarily die in them too, are fain to spend or waste away their time from one amusement to another,

another, in order to banish all Serious Thoughts; and they cannot go to Bed, until Nature is quite tired with this or that diversion, or the mind clouded, if not stupified, with the fumes of *Wine* or other liquors.

What has been said, may possibly be sufficient to satisfy a reasonable unbiassed man, that he has an *Immortal Soul* joined to a Mortal Body. *Moses* acquaints us that *God made man in the Image of God*, and repeats it twice in the same Verse, *Gen. 1.* that the assertion might have the greater force, and to remove all doubts concerning it, or that men might be doubly assured of the Dignity of Humane Nature, which is far above that of all other Animals, and little inferior even to the Angelical. And this Divine Original of the Souls of Men did not altogether escape either the cognizance or the penetration even of Heathen Philosophers, and Poets. And cer-

tainly we have reason to think the more Honourably of *Humane Nature*, since the *Eternal Son of God* condescended to assume it, and to be born, in that respect, like unto other Men.

In the proof of any thing we ought to be contented with the best evidence the thing is capable of. Things very *distant* from us in point of time, or done in former days, and things *invisible*, may very reasonably be believed, tho' they cannot come under the information of our Senses. 'Twould be very wise to doubt of all those things that are related in the *Roman* and *Grecian* Histories, because we cannot *now see* them done. And yet we believe them generally to be true, because persons worthy to be believed have long ago writ them, and transmitted the knowledge of them to us who live so long after them. Is there any other way possible to conceive how we should come to the know-

knowledge of them then that we have? nay have we not the very same Authority, for what we are taught in the Sacred Writings, as we have for what is related in the Profane? Or have we not rather much *greater Authority* for what is recited by our Sacred Authors, then there can be for what is derived to us by others? The Miracles wrought by the Apostles in the sight of all men, the voluntary submission of so many persons soon after them, to all sorts of cruel deaths, in confirmation of the truth of those Miracles, and the universal propagation of the Christian Religion into all parts of the then known World, from the East to the farther parts of the West, and into all the remote Regions both North and South, are such Arguments of the truth of that Religion, and its solid foundation upon *Christ* and his *Apostles*, as nothing else, whether in writing or in fact, can ever pretend to. And supposing the

Scriptures to be True, is it possible for us at this distance from the writing of them, to imagine or desire any other, or greater, or better evidence than what we now have of them? Or again, supposing them to be any way deficient in point of veracity, is it possible to conceive, that plain, innocent, ordinary, impolitick, and illiterate men, such as the *Apostles*, could be guilty of contriving a Doctrine so contrary to our and their own sensual appetites, and so contrary to their own temporal interest, the Magistrates evry where discouraging the growth of their Doctrine; and lastly that *such* men should after many difficulties and long troubles, after all their unwearied labours, and struggles with all manner of opposition from their Persecutors, should, I say, at last choose to forfeit their Lives, and die some ignominious or cruel death, for the sake of an *Untruth*? If any men can bring themselves to think

think so inconsistently, they are fit to be, instead of the Disciples of Christ, renowned followers of the famous Philosopher *Anaxagoras*, (who would be the Author of a *new Opinion* tho' never so extravagant) and who therefore taught that *Snow was black*.

Now tho' what has been said in a few words, (without those nice and subtile Arguments which are often used for the illustrating, and which do often serve to make Men's future expectation of Happiness more obscure and intricate than it really is) may be esteemed sufficient to prove its Credibility, yet I will not altogether omit mentioning some few hints of *Extraordinary*, or Supernatural, or at least wonderful things which have sometimes hapned, or come to pass in the course of Providence, even since the time of our *Saviour*, and his *Apostles*, and which have not wholly failed to come to pass even in our

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days. For tho it is a common saying, that *Miracles are ceased*, in opposition to the Roman-Catholics, who are pleased to furnish us with too great a store of them in every age, in order to celebrate both their former and their modern *Saints*, or to gain a greater Veneration to some *Religious Order* in their *Church*, or to some particular *Altar*, where devout Persons may pay more plentifully both their Temporal and Spiritual Respects, for the benefit of that *Order*, or of those who constantly attend that *Altar*; yet I cannot but think, even by the small observation of things that I have made, that there does sometimes happen in many places, in every age, and even in this present, some certain Evidence, and remarkable Testimony of *God's wonderful Power and Providence* over mankind, or at least more plainly sensible in the observation of particular Persons. And I appeal to the

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Conscience and Observation of *Good Men* in general, whether they have not taken notice of some special and signal acts of *Providence*, manifest and visible in the course of their *own Lives*. And tho' it is become very unfashionable, and is held to be a sign of Weakness to believe any thing of that nature, or to take any notice of such things when they do happen, yet I have often observed, that good People are not ashamed to own, among Friends, that they have had very sensible and particular instances of *God's* more immediate Protection, or preservation of them. And this may be said for such persons, that if they should ascribe to *Providence*, more then possibly they might need to do, in respect of such instances, or notices, it never will, nor can do them any hurt in Spirituall; it will be an effect of *Piety* at least, and can no more offend the Supream Being, then an humble, but unnecessary acknowledge-

ledgement of benefits does offend an usual Benefactor.

But because such things as are very *Extraordinary* do not usually happen in the open street, or in the Market-place, or before any great concourse of people, ought they therefore reasonably to be doubted? All Contracts and Obligations, are held to be valid, if they be performed in the presence of two or three credible Witnesses. And is it possible to discover the Truth of Matters of Fact, in Criminal cases, if the evidence of a very few unexceptionable Witnesses be not admitted? But in case of an Apparition, or Miracle, or other extraordinary Event, tho' attested upon Oath, by some few Honest and Credible persons, there must be a greater liberty of judgment; many sensible persons think themselves not at all obliged to believe Them, unless they could also see them with their own Eyes, as well as *those of others.*

others. Whoever happens to see such particular things at any time, tho' before he were as Wise or Honest, or as Credible as other men, yet *then* he is suspected to be weak, and simple, and credulous, or else he must have some secret Design to impose upon men of Judgement. And because in matters Criminal there have sometimes hapned Attestations which afterwards have been found not to be well-grounded, shall the Laws against Villanies be annulled, and have no force? Or shall all Contracts become suspected, because some Forgeries have been proved? As it is therefore in such matters, so it ought to be in things that are *Extraordinary*; as it is a fault to be *too* credulous, so it is to be *too incredulous*. And however it may be thought a sign of Wit and Capacity to doubt of every thing in this kind, that has not come within our particular cognizance, yet it is no great sign of Prudence,

Prudence, or Good Nature, or Good Manners, to suppose or to maintain, at least consequentially, that all men must be Fools, or Liars, or Knaves, who shall solemnly declare that they have certainly at any time seen, what themselves cannot, or *are not willing* to believe. For all their Reasoning will come at last to no more then this, because those things *may* be false, or those persons *may* be mistaken, therefore those things *are* false, and those persons *are* or *must* be mistaken.

Notwithstanding what I have said, I would not be understood as if the strong foundation of our *Faith*, which was long-a-go laid by *Christ* and his *Apostles*, could any way need, or require the assistance of later evidences to maintain, or recommend, or confirm their *Doctrine* then deliver'd to the World. It was then Promised, and therefore is not to be doubted, that
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neither the opposition of men, nor the malice of Devils, should ever prevail against the *Church of God*. Nor is there any need of laying any stress upon the extraordinary emergencies of future times. Whoever they be that will think *Scripture* Evidences to be insufficient to convince their wisdom, that there is a *Life of Eternity* to be reasonably hoped for, and undoubtedly Believed after the short and uncertain course of this, will certainly flight and turn into Ridicule, whatsoever has since that time hapned of any extraordinary nature, or does sometimes, tho' rarely, happen within the compass of present enquiry.

Cicero says, lib. 2. *de Natura Deorum*. *Nemo vir magnus sine aliquo afflatu Divino unquam fuit*. That there was never any Great Man who has not had some *Divine impulse*, or *Inspiration*. And *Aristotle* says, Ἀγαθὰ δαίμονες εἰσὶ φιλόθεοι. That Persons
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of a good *genius*, or disposition, are *Lovers of God*. If the heathen Philosophy can dictate thus much, our Christian Philosophy can teach us much more. It is not to be doubted, but *Cicero*, who was a Great Man himself, one of the Greatest, for the Endowments of his mind, that ever the *Romans*, and perhaps all the heathen World ever had; one that was thoroughly read in all the *Roman* and *Grecian* Histories; and one that has given a short and comprehensive account of all the chief Sects of Philosophers before him, and compared or argued their several opinions of Good and Evil, and stated wherein the Happiness or *summum bonum* of this life does consist; it is not to be doubted, I say, but this *Great Man* spake of this *Divine Inspiration*, through some sensible experience he might make or have of it, either in himself, or others, or through the observation he made of Great Men of his

his time, or in the Histories he had read; for it cannot reasonably be imagined, but that men of Excellent Virtues, even among the Heathens, might have sometimes more imperfect, and yet not Contemptible operations of a Good Spirit, seeing some of those Moralists, whose Veracity upon other occasions ought not to be suspected, have gone so far, as to assert even a sensible assistance or experience that they have had of a Good *Dæmon*; and since it ought not to be an Article of True Religion to become more Uncharitable, than is requisite, to all those who have not the Happiness to be adopted Members of it; and since it can never be supposed by men of any extensive Understanding and Charity, that among those infinite Multitudes, who never partaked of Revealed Knowledge, such who did preserve an Unspotted Virtue in very difficult trials, and in the midst of vile

vile contemporaries, and upon Natural Motives, and who therefore deserve our greater Admiration, might not have sometimes a very signal evidence even of *Divine Influences*, and of God's peculiar Care and Providence; and since the beneficent extent of the same Providence is and always has been diffused in some measure, as the Light of the Sun is equally distributed, unto all Mankind. Let us rather admire that so much Light has shined so conspicuously among some of them in the midst of Darkness, then be Unjust to the due Excellencies of any men, of whatsoever Denomination, when Righteousness and Justice do make so great and so essential a part of our Religion.

Nor is it to be doubted, but *Aristotle*, who was a very great Naturalist, and most acute Philosopher, a man of no mean figure in the World, being the Tutor even of *Alexander the Great*, and who there-

thereby had greater opportunities of carrying his knowledge of the World very far, who sought as far into the various dispositions of men, and had as good a Notion of the *Soul* it self, as any, that I know of, have discovered since his time; it is not, I say, to be doubted, but that this acute and inquisitive Hea-then Philosopher was well satisfied, that very good qualities would grow only in a good Soil; that the most excellent tempers had naturally a propension to what is Best and most Excellent; and that very good persons would as naturally, and willingly, and easily be *Devout* to, and place their chief *Love* on the *Supream Being*, the fountain of all Excellencies, as ill people are naturally prone to neglect, or disbelieve, or disregard what is so directly contrary to their own depraved Temper.

The Fathers are frequent in remarking and mentioning many ei-

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ther Miraculous, or Uncommon, or at least Wonderful Events, which they took notice of in the times they lived. And lately Monsieur *Maimbourg*, the Historiographer, is not wanting in that respect, in a Book he writ of *the History of the Crusade, or the Expeditions of Christian Princes for the Conquest of the Holy Land*; and which Book he writ with great Impartiality, and with great judgment, eloquence, and variety of thoughts, and with many excellent Moral and Political reflections; this *Maimbourg*, I say, has therein a no small collection of very Extraordinary, Wonderful, and sometimes Supernatural Events; and concerning which he frequently passes his judgment, like an Unbiaſſed person, not a blind and injudicious Bigot. For tho' that Author was more ingenuous and candid then is usual with those that have been early Tinctured with the Maxims of *that Society*,
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ty, which has filled the World with Fury and Extravagance, and has taught many Princes that notable *Secret*, how they may die very good Catholicks, notwithstanding some continued Immoralities of their Lives, yet he cannot be excused from some unhappy weakneses of an Imprudent Zeal, when he afterwards treated of the times of *Luther* and *Calvin*, and those wherein the *Hugonots* of *France* were so highly concerned, during the *Reigns* of *Charles* the Ninth, and *Henry* the Third. For there was no proper occasion for any needless excursions against Protestants, or any artificial misrepresentations of them, in a History of preceding times, that were full of their own *Bigotry*, *Folly*, and *Superstition*, and long before the Reformation of Religion. This Book of his was Translated into *English*, by my late Learned Friend Dr. *Nalston*, the most Elegantly and Naturally of

any that I have seen; and will afford much delight to those who are affected with strange occurrences very well writ. The period of time, that the *Crusading*, or *San-terring* there described did prevail, was no less then two hundred years, before the Princes and People of *Europe* recovered their Wits, and became so wise as to know, that it is more acceptable to *God* for Men to serve him at home and live peaceably in their own Country, then to ruin themselves and their Families with vain expences, perils and fatigues, in order to *Christianize* the once *Holy Land*, that was for ever defiled with shedding the innocent blood of the *Son of God*, and the many *Prophets* who were sent thither before him, as well as *Sanctified* by his *Divine* Presence.

I. I shall mention a very signal Act of Providence, which came to pass in the time of *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*, that most Excellent Philo-

Philosopher, and Emperor, who had frequently that noble sentence of *Plato* in his mouth, *How happy and flourishing the World would be, if either Philosophers were to Reign over it, or Kings would become Philosophers!* Not only the Historians of old, as *Eusebius*, *Orosius*, *Ulpian*, as well as *Tertullian*, do relate the Fact as indubitable, but this good Emperor did himself confirm its truth, in a Letter he writ out of *Germany* to the Senate of *Rome*; and after this Event, he, tho' a Heathen Emperor, and indeed an Honour to all Heathens, and to Emperors too, took off the *Penal Laws* from the Christians, appointing a severe punishment to their false Accusers, and promotion and Honours to such as being accused, did or should vindicate their Innocence. When this Emperor was engaged in a War with the *Marcomanni*, and his Army was unhappily shut up in its Camp; all the Passages but

of it being possessed by the Enemy, and the *Quadi*, or *Moravians*, had pent him up, as in the *furcæ Caudinæ* of the *Samnites* the *Romans* had been before; and when they refused to give the *Romans* Battle, well knowing that they would soon perish of themselves, through heat and drought and want of water; the Captain of his Guard, or *Prætorian Band*, came unto the Emperor in this extremity, and told him, *That there was nothing which could not be obtained of God by means of the Prayers of Christians; that he had one Legion of Christians in his Army, and that they were to be desired to address their Prayers for his safety, and for that of the Army.* These accordingly offered up to God their united Prayers, and it pleased God immediately to send a most refreshing Showr of rain to the *Roman Forces*, and to destroy or disperse the *Barbarians* with dreadful Thunder and Tempests; infomuch that

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part of their forces fled over to the *Romans* for shelter; others being dismayed were killed in the Field; and a few of them made their escape by flight. And from that time that *Legion* was afterwards called *Legio Fulminatrix*, or the *Thundring Legion*.

2. I will, without laying too much stress upon it, only mention what *Eusebius*, the Ecclesiastical Historian, relates in the life of *Constantine the Great*, the first Christian Emperor, who, whilst he was praying to God for success to his Arms, and was solicitous for the event of the Battle, that he was quickly to have with *Maxentius*, the Son of *Dioclesian*, and the Heir of his Father's Persecuting Spirit, and enmity to Christians; this famous *Constantine*, for ever eminent for his Virtues as well as Learning, at Noon-day, saw in the Heavens the bright appearance of a Glorious Cross, with

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these words written upon it: *ἐν τού-
τῳ νίκην.* Through this you shall over-
come your Enemies. Zosimus also
writes *lib. 1. cap. 3, 4.* that when
the Army of *Constantine* was under
apprehensions at this wonderful
fight, and *Cæsar* was full of thoughts
thereupon, *Christ* appeared unto
him in the following night, and
commanded him that he should
use the *Sign* of the *Cross*, which he
had newly seen, in the Ensign or
Standard of his Army. 'Tis cer-
tain, that through the assistance
of *Christ Crucified*, he overcame
Maxentius, overthrew his mighty
Forces, and first established Chri-
stianity in the Empire. His Wis-
dom was afterwards particularly
seen, in that, when the first Gene-
ral Council of *Nice* was called by
his Authority, and the Bishops from
all parts met together, and present-
ed their many Petitions, or Accusa-
tions against one another, instead of
peaceably determining the Contro-
versies

verfies before them, this Good and Orthodox Emperor, when he had received all their Informations, caused a fire to be made before the door of the Council, and all thofe unkind Papers to be thrown into the fire before their faces, without once reading, or taking knowledge of them. The fame thing which *Julius Cæſar* had before wiſely done, after the Battle of *Pharſalia*, when he ſeized upon all *Pompey's* Papers, and took the Letters which many Noblemen of *Rome* writ unto *Pompey* wherein would have been diſcovered their, correſpondence with him.

But however the *Sign* of the *Croſs* came afterward to be more Sanctified then was needful, and to be perverted into Dangerous uſe, when it came to be worſhipped, as 'tis ſaid to be by ſome, with *Latria* or Divine worſhip, yet it might pleaſe God to Honour the *Croſs*, on which the Saviour of the World had condeſcended to ſuffer an ignominious

minious Death, with such a Glorious appearance of *Light*, and Exaltation in the Heavens, at a time when the clouds of Infidelity came to be so totally dissipated, as they then were, by the Triumphant Settlement or publick establishment of Christianity in the Western Empire.

3. The third instance that I shall mention of an Extraordinary nature, is what St. *Austin*, a Great and Learned Father of the Church, relates in his *Confessions* concerning himself, *lib. 8. cap. 12.* This Good Man, who had lived sometime a Libertine, and was touched with remorse at his former evil life, gave a very remarkable account of his *First Conversion*. He tells us, that when he had endured great struggles between the Flesh and the Spirit, and in his retirement had shed a bundance of tears, with prayers to *God*, for a perfect conquest of himself and his vitious inclinations, it pleased *God*, that he heard a *Voice*,
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like that of a young Boy or Girl, in a singing tone, often say, as from some distance to him, *Tolle, lege, tolle, lege*: that is to say, *Take up the Book, and read*. Upon this, he immediately returned into his Chamber, where he had before left his Friend *Alippius*. He takes up the *Bible* that he had left upon the table, opens it, and reads immediately these words, *Rom. 13. 13, 14. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.* The place was so suited to St. *Austin's* circumstances, and the admonition so plain in decision of his doubts, between the charming pleasures of the World, and his good inclinations to Repentance, besides the powerful influence of that *Unknown Voice*, that he immediately resolved to halt no longer

longer between the attractions of this World and the next; he dedicated himself to the entire service of *God*, and forsook from thenceforth the plausible allurements of his old Companions; and like *St. Paul* formerly upon his Extraordinary Call, became a perfect and most eminent *Convert*.

4. It was a thing of no small astonishment, and was of a very wonderful nature, which hapned at the Martyrdom of Archbishop *Cranmer*, in Queen *Mary's* cruel Reign. It is not only related by Dr. *P. Heylin*, in his History of the Reformation, but by Dr. *G. Burnett*, now Lord Bishop of *Salisbury*, in his most Excellent *History of the Reformation*, a Work that will transmit to after-ages a full account of the Regularity and Excellency of the *English Reformation* above others, by proper Persons, without Passion or Resentments, or the humane Infirmities that attended it
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in some other places; a Work that is founded upon the incontestable Authority of *Records*, and a work that had the advantage of being revised before it went to the Press, by three of the most Eminent and Learned Prelates of our Church, Dr. *Tillotson*, Dr. *Stillingsfleet*, and Dr. *Lloyd*, the first Lord Archbishop of *Canterbury*, the other two successive Lord Bishops of *Worcester*.

When that Excellent Person *Cranmer* was crowned with Martyrdom at *Oxford*, for his Religion, *his Heart was found to remain unburnt, the rest of his Body being consumed to ashes*. A thing so extraordinary was very unlikely to be invented, especially in such a place of Knowledge and Learning, and to the confusion or mortification of his then insolent and triumphing adversaries. But since he had a little before shewn the weakness of humane nature in time of Temptation, as St. *Peter*

Peter himself, that great Apostle, had done before him; since he was seduced by the crafty insinuations of his enemies, to sign a *Recantation* that was brought him, contrary to the inward perswasion of his *Heart*; and since he did so courageously burn *that Hand* first, which was the instrument of his weakness, it pleased God to confound and astonish his Enemies by that wonderful preservation of his *Sound and sincere Heart*, in the midst of the Flames, that consumed the rest of his Body.

If there be sometimes among men a *Prescience*, or foreknowledge of things, in which there is no natural connection of Causes and Effects, and of things concerning which the greatest humane Wisdom can never of it self judge; such *Prescience* or Fore-knowledge must necessarily proceed from some invisible communication, by means of Angels or Spirits, of a superior
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and more perfect understanding. That there has been such a *Prescience* frequently among Mankind, not only the Sacred History of the *Prophets* does demonstrate, but *Cicero* says, *It is the most ancient opinion of all nations, and has their universal consent to the belief of it.* And tho' there has been much Superstition, and Imposition mixed with Truths of this kind, as indeed all things in this world that are Excellent, or Admirable, are liable to Abuses, yet it does not at all derogate from the intrinsic Excellency of Truth, that Errors have sprung up with it. For there would not be Counterfeits, or false resemblances, if there were not also things of a Real Excellency, that are worth the imitation.

Though *Dreams* be commonly thoughts roving at random, and wandering to and fro without the guide of reason; tho' they be often the effects of a predominant temper
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of Body, and fluctuate according to the present disposition of the humours ; and tho' they are frequently interpreted to signify strange things by a feminine Superstition, when really they signify nothing but the present disposition of the Body; yet certainly sometimes there are that way considerable notices given to Good Men, and Dreams that are unaccountable, if not *Divine*. And notices of this kind have been so frequent in all the World, besides those that are mentioned in the Scriptures, that there are few persons to whose particular observation, either in themselves or others, there have not occurred some very remarkable, and Extraordinary Instances.

I shall mention but one particular, that occasioned the preservation of a very Good Man from immediate death, and what is related and credited still in his Family, because he did not forbear sometimes
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to relate it among them, and because a *most Learned and Pious Bishop* of our Church, now Living, told me he had it from the Good Doctor's own mouth, according as I shall deliver it, and you may find it told much to the same purpose by Mr. *Awbrey*, in his *Miscellaneous Collection of Prodigious Events*, Printed *anno* 1696, as well as since then by Mr. *Beaumont*, in his Treatise lately printed, of *Spirits, Apparitions, Witchcraft, &c.* They have both mistaken the name of the Person, relating it of Dr. *Harvey*, instead of Dr. *Hamey*, and for that reason also I have rather chosen to mention this relation, to rectify the mistake.

5. Dr. *Baldwin Hamey* was lately a very eminent Physician of the College in *London*, and one of the most considerable Benefactors to the said College. He gave, besides other Donations, thirty pounds a year to be added unto the usual Salary

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lary of the Physician of each Hospital in *London*, provided that the Governors of those Hospitals did choose upon a Vacancy, one of two Physicians that should be recommended to them by the College. And he desired that those two Physicians so recommended by the College, should not give themselves the trouble of Visiting the Governors at their Houses, as is customary, having observed very mean condescensions, and servile applications to the several Governors (some of which Governors were then men of low degree) by very worthy and Excellent Physicians; and by this Donative he hoped to prevent those mean condescensions, and unsuitable applications. The Doctor was so zealous also for the Honour of his Faculty, that when he was more than once offered the Honour of Knighthood, he always declined it, for this reason, lest he should seem by that new accession of Honour
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to undervalue, or not to have a due sense of his Doctoral Dignity.

But to proceed, this worthy and Good Dr. *Hamey*, when he was a young man, and desirous to Travel abroad to see *Italy*, and other Foreign parts, came to *Dover* with divers other Gentlemen, with whom he intended to Travel. There the Mayor of *Dover* in his sleep saw the exact *Idea* of Dr. *Hamey*, whom he had never before seen, and was admonished or commanded in his Dream to stop such a Person, and hinder him from going over in the Packet-boat. The next morning he comes to the Packet-boat, and viewed all the Passengers that were to embark, lets the rest pass unmolested, but stops the Doctor, and hinders him from embarking. The Doctor was at first much concerned at this hindrance by the Mayor, and expostulated with him, what an injury 'twould be to him to be separated from his Companions, but he was

soon pacified upon knowing the true cause, and the next day was very sensibly affected at God's wonderful Providence over him, and Preservation of him, when a Vessel came into the Port, and related that they had a little before seen that Packet-boat with every Passenger or Person in it sink before them in a terrible Storm that then hapned.

I could also mention some very signal instances that have this way hapned to my own observation. But shall wave them in prudence, because perhaps liable to censure, or it may be to the sport of those who slight and despise all notices of this kind, tho never so remarkable. And besides whilst men are living, publick communications of them may justly be suspected of some Vanity or Design, by intelligent Persons.

And tho' divers things of a very *Extraordinary* nature, and such as have been sufficiently attested by credible, or undeniable Witnesses, have

have hapned within our own memory, and particular cognizance, yet I shall pass them over, as well-known to such who become inquisitive in those matters, and I will mention only one of our Modern Wonders, or Supernatural Events, that hapned very lately in *Westminster*.

6. In the year 1700, a few months after the late King of *Spain* died, and a little before the Parliament met, that had before them the great and dismal Consequences that were likely to attend the loss of that Prince; on *Christmas* Eve, an Infant of only six months old, the Son of Lieutenant Colonel *Edgcomb*, of the Foot-Guards, when he was come out of a Convulsive Fit, lifted up his Eyes and Hands to Heaven, and with tears trickling down his cheeks, before divers Witnesses spake distinctly for near a quarter of an hour, sometimes O *God*, sometimes O *Jesus*. Whither

the Infant was sensible, by a Divine aid, of the universal miseries, desolations, and effusions of blood, that were preparing to fall upon all *Europe*; or whither he was sensible of any present post-poning, or tergiversation, in the vigorous opposition that was then every where necessary, or expedient, to prevent the impending power and greatness of *France*; or whither the licentiousness and immoralities of the time might occasion such an Exclamation; or for what other reason so unusual a Transport from a little Infant might come to pass, I will not presume to determine. But this is certain, that the *Father* and the *Mother*, the *Nurse*, a *Maid* of the house, and a neighbouring *Gentlewoman*, were all present, when this most surprizing Event did happen; and after the Child was gone to Heaven, which was the second day following, or on *St. Stephen's* day, all those persons present went
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voluntarily before Sir *Richard Buckleigh*, a Justice of Peace, and made Oath of the Truth of this *Supernatural* Occurrence.

I have sometimes thought, and have presumed to recommend it unto the consideration of some of our chiefest Prelates, whither it might not be expedient, and beneficial, that my Lords the *Bishops* would sometimes in their Visitations give it as an Instruction to their Clergy, that if any thing Extraordinary, or Supernatural, did by common report happen within the limits of their Cures, they would enquire into the Truth of such matters, and have the Truth attested by Witnesses, where it was thought to deserve such cognizance, before some Justice of the Peace, and transmit the account of it to their Diocesan. Doubtless some careful collection of that kind, however Scoffers might entertain it, would more tend to the confirmation of Good

men in their Good Principles, and to the reproach or conviction of Unbelievers, then many excellent Precepts usually do. For though there will be Impostures in the World by designing persons, they cannot long eclipse the lustre of *Truth* in plain matter of Fact, nor discredit its real Excellency and Authority.

I hope the few Instances and Arguments afore-mentioned, may have some weight with Good persons to enforce or enliven their Belief of *another Life* after this. For if men are not in some measure naturally, or through the Grace of God disposed, or inclined to such Belief; whatsoever can be said concerning it, will have but very little force to perswade them. Nay I do much doubt, whither those exceeding great evidences of God's Presence and Power, which the *Israelites* had in the Wilderness, and before their Deliverance out of *Ægypt*; whe-

whither, I say, if those or the like Miraculous Demonstrations of a Supream and Almighty Power were to be transacted again in the World, whither they would have any durable effect upon the minds of those who either wish, and desire there should be no other World besides this, or who, if they do suppose or faintly believe another life, are peremptorily resolved to take the unlawful Enjoyments and Affections of this along with them, if it were possible, into the other World. For we do not find, that even the Miracles of *Christ* and his *Apostles*, the greatest and the most effectual that could possibly be desired for conviction, had any manner of influence on the Hypocritical *Scribes* and *Pharisees* formerly, who did shut their eyes to what they saw, and were obstinately resolved not to believe any Evidence whatsoever of the Divine Mission of our *Lord*, but were the more enraged

enraged against him and his *Apostles*, the *Greater Miracles* they saw performed by them.

As there is a natural chain and connection of *Virtues*, which easily leads and conducts Men from one *Virtue* to another, in order to *Perfection*. And as there is a natural progression in *Vice* from one degree to another, until men attain an obdurate Heart, and a consummate *Impenitency*; so there is in *Faith* an ascent upwards, from one degree to another, until men come to be Heavenly-minded, and have some sort of *Communion with the Saints* above. And likewise there is in *Infidelity* a prone descent from one step of disbelief unto another, until at last the *Unbelievers* do fall down to the bottom of the *Precipice*.

One thing more I could add to the *Relations* before mentioned. For tho' *Omens*, presaging future *Calamities* to the *Publick*, or great misfortunes to particular *Persons*,
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or else great Alterations, or Revolutions in the State, make but little impresson upon many, yet certainly there do happen sometimes very remarkable *Omens*, which neither deserve to be slighted as trivial events, nor are usually disregarded by Serious persons. When they are very Considerable and Notorious, however they may be despised or over-looked by some, yet they are seasonable Admonitions to the Good, and are great Evidences of God's Providence over the World, and sometimes plainly speak the future intentions or displeasure of an over-ruling Power towards Mankind.

The late stupendous *Comet* in the latter end of 1663, that preceded the late dreadful Plague, which swept away only in *London* near 100000 persons, and which *Comet* stretched with its long tail over almost one half of the Hemisphere, was such an *Omen* as can never be
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forgotten. For whatever Naturalists may say concerning such *Comets* that they are only Meteorological Exhalations from below, yet they have frequently proved manifestations of the Divine Wrath; and we must justly conclude with the Poet, — *Nunquam Spectatum impune Cometam*. That Comets were never seen without some impending Calamity.

The *Omens* (to omit those that are mention'd in Authors to have hapned in ancient times) which came to pass in King *Charles* the First's time, before the Civil Wars; those which presaged the unfortunate end of Archbishop *Laud*; those which hapned very lately to King *James* the Second on his Coronation-day, and were visible to the Spectators, were much taken notice of in their time, and will not be easily forgotten. But one thing I shall mention, being in some measure an eye-witness of it, which hapned

happened in *St. Andrew's Church* in *London*, on the day, and about the very exact time, that the late King *William* and Queen *Mary*, of Glorious Memory, were proclaimed King and Queen of these Realms.

The Royal Arms of *England*, with the *Crown* over them, and the *J.* and *R.* on each side of them were painted at large in *Glass*, and placed in *K. James's* Reign on the upper part of the high Window, at the East-end of that Church. It was *Ash-wednesday, Feb. 13. 1688*, the Solemnity of which day drew many to Church. The Wind was then pretty high. And when I seated my self, I observed all the People staring at the East-end after an unusual manner. And upon enquiry understood that the whole *Regal Arms* were just then blown down, and at the same time hear'd the Guns going off at the proclaiming the King and Queen. The *Glasier* who had set them up, soon after

ter pick'd up in the Street all the panes or pieces of the painted-glass, and put them afterwards at home, as near as possible, into their former order. That which was Remarkable was, that he could not find the least portion of the *F*, it was so shattered all to pieces. The *Arms* were gathered up in fragments, and placed again so carefully at his house, that they appeared in their old form, with very little or very few defects to disfigure them, although they fell from a very great height. The *R* fell with them, and remained entire, except a little grate of one end of it at the bottom, but the *Crown* was suspended above by the lead from falling, and was therefore taken down. I shall make no Comment upon this Event, but leave the Reader to form his own Judgment.

Now if any of these or the like hints, arguments, or motives, can conduce to make men consider and reflect.

reflect on the manifold Evidences, which easily concur either directly or collaterally, to the proof or demonstration of a *Future State*, which if it is reasonably to be expected, is of the highest concernment possible, I shall be glad to have any way contributed to it; altho' the imperfections herein, both in method and matter, must be far inferior to the Excellency of the Subject. For I have rather endeavoured to suggest some occasional thoughts thereupon, which naturally occur to my own mind upon some interrupted intervals, then examined the order, method, and apodictical arguments of learned men, who have taken pains on this Great Subject. It is with Arguments as it is with Tafts. The food which is agreeable to one man's palate, is very disagreeable to another, and there is great variety of every kind provided by Nature, to please the different relish of different people

people. And so it is in Perswasion, sometimes such Arguments as do naturally arise without artifice or study, shall have much greater force than Elaborate Discourses. One is overcome with Reason, another with Example, and a third shall be affected with that which has little probability of persuasion in the opinion of another. I have therefore entertained my Reader with some variety of Reflections, which possibly may deserve some regard or attention, as being not altogether useless, and being directed to a Good End; since even amusements or Curiosities of no great moment, such as *Poetical fictions, Medals, Shells, and Insects*, have met with a gentle reception, and have sometimes employed the leisure of very considerable men.

As for the Nature and glorious condition of a *Future State* of Happiness, the wisest of men must never expect any other knowledge of it,

it, then what is made known in the *Scriptures*. Whoever carries his Imagination farther then that, wades into an Ocean quite out of his depth, and deserves not much more attention to what he says, then is due to what Poets or wise men of old have said concerning the *Elysian Fields*. *The Eternal Generation of the Son of God, the Mystery of the Trinity in Unity, the Incarnation of Christ by a Virgin, the Resurrection of the same Body,* thousands of years after it has been Buried and Corrupted, &c. are things that cannot reasonably be disputed by Christians, who believe the *Scriptures*; but when Ingenious men do undertake to explain those Mysteries, and make the mode of them intelligible to us, their finest conceptions, and their most sublimest thoughts, do only serve to shew the greatness of humane Ignorance, if not their own Insufficiency.

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Whither the Blessed Spirits in Heaven do understand and know what is done upon Earth; and whither Good Men, who do now enjoy a state of Happiness, and who whilst they lived upon Earth, have read or hear'd of many Great and Famous Men, whom they might here be desirous to see and know in the *Future State*; whither, I say, they shall then know those famous men personally with respect to their former Virtues and Piety; or whither those Souls that are inflamed with the *Love of God*, and are full of admiration of the *Wisdom*, the *Power*, the *Glory*, and the *Goodness* of the *Supreme Majesty*, shall be at leisure to reflect on the vain transactions, and past or present imperfections of this lower world, must be uncertain to us, and will reasonably be doubted by Wise Men. For 'tis certain, their Happiness will meet with no interruption, their

their Joys, Content, and Satisfaction, will be compleat beyond our weak imaginations. All *wrath* and *strife*, *variance*, *revilings*, *hatred*, *envyings*, and *emulations*, will then be for ever banished; and *Love*, *Joy*, *Peace*, *Goodness*, and other fruits of the *Blessed Spirit*, will fill and possess the Soul without any defect, or allay.

That there are *degrees* of Happiness and Glory in Heaven, suited to the capacities of all the Blessed; that there is and will be some subordination of Glory, *as one Star exceeds another Star in Glory*; and that this subordination will be suitable to the intenseness of their *Love of God*, the purity of their *Holiness*, the strength of their *Faith*, the excellency of their *Morals*, and the greatness of their *Self-denials*, in their former state of Life, may be reasonably conjectured; but that there will be no contention for Su-

periority, no strife for Precedency, no Ambition for more Exalted Stations, in the regions of Eternal Peace and Tranquility, we have good reason to conclude: since the Humblest Minds will be most highly Exalted; since *he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven*, will be far Greater then he could possibly wish or imagine; and since ev'ry Soul will be filled with transports of Satisfaction, beyond all humane conceptions or desires.

That the Blessed *Angels* do minister unto Mankind; that God has given them charge over Good men, and that they have sometimes appeared to do so, in an extraordinary manner, is evident from the Scriptures; and that they do *rejoice in Heaven at the Conversion of a Sinner*, cannot be doubted; but to address our prayers to them, or to any but God himself, does not seem likely to be pleasing unto them

them, or advantageous to us, but I am sure *may* be very displeasing to a *Jealous God*, who by his *Propbets* has so frequently declared his indignation against all manner of *Idolatry*.

And now I have done with what I thought might in some measure tend to incite men to the firm belief of a *Future State*, let us take a short prospect of this our *Present Life*.

And what is *this Life* that men are so unreasonably fond of? Our *Infancy* is wasted away in feeding, sleeping, or crying, without the least appearance of Rational Faculties, more than what we see in the young of other Animals; and our *Childhood* is amused with bawbles, or is spent about insignificant trifles. If it were not for the *Innocence* of that tender age, there is nothing in these stages of Life, but what might well merit a contempt of it. A third part of Humane kind is thought to die before seven years old,

old, and perhaps that third part of Mankind, which falls off in their budd, is thereby much happier then the other *two*, which come to more maturity, and who live to lose their Native Innocence, and generally to contract Guilt upon Guilt.

Youth does commonly burn with Lust, or pursues all sorts of follies and irregularities with the utmost vehemence. Infomuch that in this blooming age, wherein Life is enjoyed with the greatest *gusto*, and Health meets with the least interruption, so many Persons do become miserable and unfortunate, either through an ill conduct, or adverse fortune, that infinite swarms of *Young Men* do readily quit all the ease and comforts of a regular way of living, or else are obliged to do so, for to betake themselves unto the hazards and disorders of War, by Sea and Land, for Bread to subsist

sist on; and lawless *Youths* are fain to undergo tamely a bondage or coercion that admits not too lively a description. And the lives of these, as they are indeed of use to their Country, for its just defence, so they are often as profusely thrown away through the unnecessary resentments or restless intrigues of Ambitious Princes, as if they deserved no manner of care or consideration in nature, and therefore are frequently cast away as vilely as *Dirt to Dirt*, together with the lives of others of more Noble and Generous Principles.

Manhood is full of cares and sollicitudes, from the Prince to the Peasant, and it is usually spent in an endless pursuit of uncertain, or unnecessary, or unsatisfactory Riches, we commonly know not for whom (life is so uncertain) nor why neither, unless it be to gratify the secret Pride of dying Rich

Rich, and that often with the misfortune of living Poor, and depriving our selves of the conveniencies we abound with.

Old Age is attended with unavoidable Infirmities, or such as former follies and irregularities have encreased upon us, and too often with a preposterous and ridiculous Avarice. For when their Journey is as it were at an end, *old* men are more sollicitous to lay up stores of provision for it, then ever they were before. Nay, I have my self known divers persons in advanced years become even *Lunatick*, tho' they were in very good and considerable circumstances, for fear of wanting Bread before they die. And a very Ancient and Learned Gentleman now living has assured me, that he has divers times seen heretofore a most Eminent person in his Profession, in the latter years of a great *Old Age*, shed tears in his

his presence for fear he should come to Want before he died, tho' he had then scraped together the greatest Wealth and Riches that any one of his Profession had ever before been known to do, perhaps in all the World. And if the *wisest Age* of man can be guilty of such Imprudence, what follies may not be expected from the more unripe experience of *Youth* or *Manhood*.

Among all the follies wherewith Mankind is apt to be infatuated, there are none so extravagant and unaccountable as those of the *Old Miser*, and the *Old Epicurean*. The first does Idolize his Wealth, when he can have no enjoyment of it, when he is just upon the necessity of taking his final leave of all the World, and when his abundance does only serve to make his best friends secretly long for his departure, that the spoil may be
divi-

divided, or inherited. Of the latter sort we have lately had here a most egregious instance, in an *Old Epicurean*, whose Volumes are had in no small esteem, and which do sufficiently shew how entirely Devoted he was to his Pleasure; how tenderly he loved this World, and how diffident he was in the Belief of another. They do contain, among promiscuous Subjects, notable *Encomiums* on the Happiness of *Pleasure, Repose, the Fair Sex, Champagne, and delicate Eating*; and yet by good fortune, good management, and a good Constitution, together with a long forbearance of the Immense Goodness, he hapned to outlive the long period of our celebrated Mr. *Hobbs*, his most beloved and most agreeable Author, and recommended by him above all to the study of others, next unto *Don Quixot*.

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It was a short, but very significant Lecture of Mortality, lively representing the low condition unto which the most Renowned Mortals must be at last reduced, and worthy of all Men's serious Meditation, but more especially of Ambitious Princes; which *Saladin* the great *Saracene* Emperor, gave unto the World, a little before his Death. For then calling to him the Officer, who was wont to bear his Standard in his Army, he commanded him to carry at his Funeral a Linnen Shrowd on the top of a Lance, and to proclaim aloud: *This is all that the Great Saladin, the Conqueror of the East, does now retain, of all the immense Treasures that he had got by his many mighty Conquests.*

Long Life has been every where, and in all Ages, esteemed a great Happiness and Blessing, and in the Sacred History has been promised
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and granted as a Blessing to Good Men; and it certainly deserves to be so esteemed, for this one Reason especially before all others, because it gives men a longer opportunity of growing to *Perfection*, of still becoming Wiser and Better than before. If it were not for *that* benefit and advantage of *Long Life*, if it were not for the means and capacity of preparing and fitting our selves more and more for the future enjoyment of *Immortal Happiness* in a glorious Life, after this is ended, there is nothing in *this Life* which ought to make a Wise Man fond of *Living Long*, considering the troubles, uncertainties, vexations and follies, considering the manifold infirmities, and unsatisfactory pleasures which do necessarily go through all conditions of humane Life.

But whatsoever value and esteem *Humane Life*, with all its disadvantages

vantages, may justly deserve, and however *Long Life* with tolerable Health, and a convenient competency, may well require all due care and prudence, in order to attain it; and especially since Nature alone is so very dim-sighted, and can give us but a weak prospect of *Futurity*, and consequently but faint aspirations after it: Yet there can be no comparison between *Temporal* and *Eternal*, between *Mortality* and *Immortality*, the *Body* and the *Soul*, or between a Life necessarily attended with cares, troubles, and vicissitudes, and an endless duration and fruition of Perfect Happiness, Joy, Satisfaction, and Glory, beyond all imagination, and without any the least possible interruption.

But notwithstanding the exceeding great difference that there is between the imperfections of our Present, and the inconceivable Happiness

pineness of our *Future State*, and notwithstanding all the manifold evidences, both Natural and Revealed, that it has pleased God to give us for the absolute *Certainty* of a succeeding *Immortality*; tho' possibly some may still be so foolish as to think, what *Vaninus*, that renowned Martyr for Atheism, did once openly maintain (and who therefore justly suffered for his intolerable Impudence, as well as extravagant Imprudence) *that there is no God*, no other Governor of this World but what we see; and tho' perhaps some few may still conceit with the weakest and most ridiculous of all the antient Philosophers, the *Epicureans*, howsoever advantageously they be represented by the Learned *Gassendus*, that Mankind, tho' never so curiously and wonderfully framed, sprung up at first by Chance out of the Earth, together with all
their

their fellow creatures or animals of every kind; and when the Original Striplings had gained strength enough to effect it, that they broke afunder their radical Navil-strings by which they had been hitherto fastned, or tied to their Mother Earth, and then began to range about for Nourishment without Leading-strings, or the help of a Nurse: and that *thus*, by a strange *Chance*, first discovered by these wise Naturalists, who so magnify Humane *Pleasure*; *thus* began the Noble race of *Mankind*, both their *Soul* and their *Body*, their Soul being found by the same discoverers to be nothing but Matter exalted into finer motion then ordinary; that *thus Mankind*, who Lords it so high above other Animals, had so wretched and *contemptible* a *beginning*. Though, I say, such wild improbabilities, if not manifest impossibilities, may well become Fundamen-

mental Principles with some men of parts and figure in the World, who scorn to think after the common and vulgar manner, and who dispossess themselves of all those natural prejudices, which are to others so hard to overcome, in behalf of *Another World*, and for the existence of *Invisible Beings*: Yet there are but very few, who will not *verbally* acknowledge, that they do believe a *Future State*, how much soever their Lives and Actions are a contradiction to such Belief.

For though the notions of *Infidelity* may be choicely entertained in secret, or in the dark, and perhaps by some Clubbs of dissolute Libertines; yet they dare not appear publicly and by day-light, without a Mask, or Disguise, or in the resemblance of a Buffoon; because the Magistracy in all places can never countenance them beyond

yond a friendly connivance, and must openly discourage, whatever they think, that which naturally tends to the subversion of all Government, and certainly cancels the greatest obligations to Honesty and Justice.

I will conclude with the dying Words of *Cyrus*, the founder of the great *Persian* Monarchy, as they are represented by *Xenophon* in his incomparable *Cyropædia*. Happy 'twill be even for a Christian, when dying, if he can with a good Conscience make the same profession of his *universal Love and Charity*! and Happy that Hea-then who could leave the world with so pious and Christian Ejaculation! After he is said by *Xenophon* to have discoursed of the *Immortality of the Soul*, and that he could never think, that

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the Soul could properly be said to Live, whilst it remained in a mortal body, but when it was freed from Corporal mixture, that then it became pure, and wise, and unspotted in its nature; he at last addresses himself to God in these words: Thou knowest that I have been a lover of Mankind, and now that I am leaving this World, I hope to find that Mercy from thee, which I have shewed unto others.

The Memory of such Illustrious Men, who without any Revelation did Believe and Hope for Immortality, will be ever Glorious to Posterity; when Voluptuaries and Unbelievers, who do place all their Hopes and Confidence in a vain and indeed Melancholick Supposition, that the Soul dies together with the Body, shall be buried in Oblivion,

vision and perith with Infamy and everlasting Contempt. It was a Kind and Extensive saying, and said with great Authority, by Him who spake with that wisdom as never Man spake: Blessed are they who have Not Seen the evidences of a Resurrection, and yet have Believed.

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